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YALE LECTURES ON THE  
RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP

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THE HINDRANCES TO GOOD  
CITIZENSHIP



# THE HINDRANCES TO GOOD CITIZENSHIP

BY  
JAMES BRYCE



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**THE HINDRANCES TO GOOD  
CITIZENSHIP**



# I

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN first I was honoured by the request to deliver this course of lectures, founded by one whom I knew and respected, and who was himself the model of a generous and public-spirited citizen, zealous in many good works, I hesitated to undertake a function which could, as it seemed to me, be better discharged by some American citizen who, because he was a citizen, knew from personal observation and experience what are the duties and responsibilities that belong to citizenship in this country. Such a lecturer would, I thought, have the facts more thoroughly before him than a stranger could, and could deal with them more freely than one who might feel that it would be unbecoming for him to criticise the standard of civic duty in a nation to which he did not belong.

Presently, however, it struck me that the fundamental problems of citizenship are the same in all free countries, that as all preceding lecturers had

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viewed them from an American point of view, there might be some advantage in having them presented from an European point of view also, that the experience we Europeans have gained might be profitable to you here, and finally that every man who has in one country enjoyed exceptional opportunities of studying the actualities of politics owes it to his friends in other countries to give them such conclusions as he has been able to form. Such opportunities have, as it happens, come in my way during many years spent in active political life in the British Parliament. Moreover, we English students owe a special duty to America, not only in respect of our fraternal attachment to your nation, but also because our political phenomena resemble yours more nearly than they do those of any other country, so that reflections drawn from Great Britain are likely to have some practical worth for you. Thus, I came eventually to the conclusion that the privilege of addressing you on the Duties of Citizenship was one I ought not to forego.

What I have to say to you will accordingly be mainly based on what I have seen in Europe, and especially in England. When my observations are

expressed in general terms, you will understand that they primarily refer to the phenomena of Europe, and when they are meant to refer to the United States, I shall say so expressly. I dwell on this point in order to avert possible misconceptions and to prevent you from supposing that I shall in any way approach that field of current politics which is to me, who represent here another country, a forbidden field. It will be only natural if some remarks I may have to make, though drawn from English experience, should be applicable here, because the differences between your institutions and ours are differences more often of form than of substance. The hindrances to good citizenship are at bottom and in principle the same in both countries, though the particular shape and aspect they take in one or the other may sometimes conceal their resemblance. Accordingly, when I have occasion to note and comment on some phenomenon which occurs both in Europe and here, you will not suppose that my remarks are necessarily suggested by, or directed to, what I have observed in the United States.

Everywhere in human society two principles have been and are at work, principles antagonistic to one another, yet equally essential to the well-

Principles  
underlying  
popular  
govern-  
ment.

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being of civil society. These are the principle of Obedience and the principle of Independence, the submission of the individual will to other wills and the assertion of that will against other wills. The former principle, carried to excess, gives Despotism. The latter, carried to excess, and generally diffused through a people, ends in Anarchy. The undue extension of the former has been so widespread as to have brought nearly all communities into a stage of despotic government and (till very recently) kept most of them there, whereas Anarchy has scarcely existed except in that detachment of individuals or families from one another which belongs to the very rudest states of society.

The reasonable mean between, or an adjustment to one another of, these two principles creates what we call Free or Popular government, in which a relatively large number of individual wills agree to form a collective will of the community, and to obey that will cheerfully because each individual has borne a part in forming it.

This scheme seems to offer not only the best security that the interests of all will be fully considered and the common interest best attained, but also the best prospect that each individual

mastery over nature must somehow be accompanied by a mastery over his own worse impulses? how much by the first stirrings of the spirit of Romanticism and the longing to return to nature and simplicity? For such an inquiry, however, this is not the place. All I ask you to note is that these Perfectionists based their ideal of Democracy on a view of human nature which had been held neither in the ancient world nor (so far as I recall) by anybody in the Middle Ages. They assumed, and (the modern apostles of popular government) have generally assumed, that the mass of mankind, at any rate in what are called civilized countries, will be Capable Citizens, i.e. that they will have sense enough to judge of public affairs, discernment enough to choose the right men for office, self-control enough to accept the decision of the majority, honesty enough to seek the general interest rather than try to secure their own at the expense of the community, public spirit enough to take trouble or even face danger for the good of the community. When in the course of events it became painfully evident that the bulk of the people at any given time in any given country might not and in fact did not possess these merits,



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the idealist was not dismayed. His faith in the vivifying force of freedom (made him hope all things and believe all things)

"The people," so he used to argue, "may be more ignorant and apathetic than we foresaw. That is because they have not been heretofore trusted. Now that their destinies are being committed to their own hands, their capacity will grow. Opportunity will soon evoke intelligence. Power will bring responsibility and kindle zeal. Trust the people and they will quickly justify your trust."

Throughout the long struggle for liberty and nationality which began in Western Europe in 1789, and has now reached the shores of the Bosphorus, these hopes sustained the combatants and found voice in predictions still more confident, predictions which saw in freedom the cure for all human ills.

American  
idealists.

The founders of your republic were somewhat less sanguine. They had enjoyed self-government long enough to know that it is not a sovereign remedy for the faults of political society. Some of them, especially in Connecticut and Massachusetts, had the Puritan faith in Original Sin. Others, like

Hamilton and Morris, were keen observers and austere censors of human frailty. They knew that there would be some bad men in politics, and plenty of weak, ignorant, or foolish men. They made due provision in their Constitutions against those who should try to deceive and mislead the people. But Jefferson had, at least till he gained experience as President, boundless reliance on the capacity of the people to know and do what was best. To hold or at least to profess such a belief became in the United States the habit, almost the duty, of good republicans for many a long year. (The most daring application of the doctrine in a concrete case was that made by the men who more than a generation ago carried the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Federal Constitution.)

In Europe, those who, early in the last century, sympathized with the patriots in Greece and Spain, those who conspired and fought for liberty in Italy and Poland, those who made or approved the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 in France, those who worked for constitutional government and national unity in Germany, were filled with the brightest hopes for the future. Under the light of liberty all the evils which misgovernment had produced

European  
idealists.

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in the past were to vanish. A reign of brotherhood and peace, an age of tranquil prosperity and assured order, was to dawn upon the long afflicted peoples. They would govern themselves well, not merely because every one would seek the common good, but because Freedom is the parent of Virtue. These feelings were less passionately expressed by Liberals in England than by the disciples of Mazzini in Italy, or by men like Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and Louis Blanc in France. But from 1830 to 1870 the general attitude of most of the powerful intellects and nearly all the finest characters among the thinkers and writers of Europe was a hopeful one, expecting immense gains to human progress and human happiness from the establishment of free institutions.

Popular  
government in  
practice.

These expectations have been in so far realized that the condition of all the countries where such institutions now exist shows a marked improvement in the condition of the masses of the people, an improvement due not merely to the advance of science and consequent diffusion of comfort, but also to a juster and more humane legislation. Nobody denies that our world of to-day is a better world for the common man. Few deny that this

is largely due to better political institutions. A striking evidence of this general conviction is to be found in the efforts which Japan and Russia have made, which Persia and the Turks are beginning to make for the establishment of parliamentary institutions. Even in China these have been talked of: (*De conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thule.*)

Nevertheless, there has been disappointment. Freedom has done much for the European and American continents, yet far less than was expected. This cannot be ascribed to defects in the particular form of government adopted, for many forms have been tried in many countries. Neither is it wholly due to inexperience, for the faults incident to popular government appear in peoples which have long enjoyed a considerable measure of freedom as well as in those that have but lately won it. Some of the evils familiar under a monarchical system have recurred, such as class hatred, corruption, extravagance, the spirit of militarism, the tendency to disorder and disregard of the law. Other new evils have emerged. Though the aspect these evils take differs in different countries, you are everywhere told that the cause is practically

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the same. The citizens have failed to respond to the demand for active virtue and intelligent public spirit which free government makes and must make. Everywhere there is the same contrast between that which the theory of democracy requires and that which the practice of democracy reveals. Remember, for this is the kernel of the matter, that the theory of democracy assumes a far higher level of good sense, judgment, honest purpose, devotion to the public welfare in the citizen of a free country, than is either looked for or needed in the subject of a despotic monarchy or of an oligarchy. Thus the deficiencies which free governments show reduce themselves to the failure of the citizens to reach the needed standard of civic excellence.

Human nature, which may appear to have improved and to be still improving, has not yet come anywhere near to reaching the Christian standard set forth in the New Testament. Neither has it yet shown itself quite good enough for the responsibilities which self-government imposes. In no European country is the average citizen what the citizen in a democracy ought to be, and in Switzerland, the country where he seems to have attained

the highest level, his superiority may be largely due to the comparative absence of the temptations which wealth brings.

Let us fix our eyes on the Average Man, because The Average Citizen in a popular government he is the man to whom everything is ultimately referred, upon whom everything ultimately turns. The government is his. Officials are only his agents, working under his eye. The principles of a democracy ascribe and must ascribe to him the supreme and final voice in the conduct of public affairs. He cannot disclaim his responsibility without the risk of forfeiting his rights.

Strictly speaking, there is no Average Man. Every individual has qualities which make his character more or less different from that of other individuals. Hence the conduct of no single person can ever be predicted with certainty. Those who have studied living things, oak trees, for instance, or kittens, know that there is no normal oak tree and, still more evidently, no normal kitten. (Kitten differs from kitten in character, as you may see when they are only a fortnight old.) Nevertheless, we form for ourselves a notion of the average kitten and its probable behaviour; and most of the

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so-called "social sciences" are obliged to posit for their purpose an average individual. The Roman lawyers created a normal "good householder" (I say normal, because he was ~~reserved~~ of as rather better than average) whom they called the *bonus paterfamilias*, and whose conduct in managing his own property was deemed to set the standard of diligence to which the law expected every man to conform when he had to care for the property of others.

If, taking any group of men, we strike off ten per cent as exceptionally intelligent and ten per cent as exceptionally dull, and then try to find a description which is broadly or roughly true of the remaining eighty per cent in the particular aspect—here the civic aspect—in which they are to be studied, that will be a description of the Average Man. It will not be exactly true of any one person in the eighty per cent, but it will be so far true that the range of variation between the extremes will be small; and it will therefore be true enough for most practical purposes in a given concrete case, as regards any mental habit which the majority may evince, any action to which the majority may incline.

When a man sitting beside you in the cars makes a remark on some incident of the day, and you say to yourself, "Just what one expects," you recognize him as a specimen of that class of Average Man which you cannot define, but which you respect as constituting the majority of your fellow-voters.

The person whom it is proposed chiefly to consider in these lectures is the Average Citizen, and the question to be asked is — Why does he fall short of the proper standard of civic duty?

Man is confessedly a very imperfect being. Nowhere has that been more emphatically stated than in Connecticut and in this University, the home of Jonathan Edwards. The special point we have to discuss is the source of man's deficiencies in the performance of that particular class of his social duties which he owes to the political community whereof he is a member.

Those deficiencies may be traced to three main causes. [They are Indolence, Personal Self-interest, Party Spirit.] I propose to devote a lecture to each of these causes, and in a concluding lecture to inquire what are the remedies that offer the best prospect of removing the evils found to exist.

Three chief causes of the defective discharge of civic duty.



## INDOLENCE

Dr. Samuel Johnson, being once asked how he came to have made a blunder in his famous English Dictionary, is reported to have answered, "Ignorance, Sir, sheer ignorance." Whoever has grown old enough to look back over the wasted opportunities of life — and we all of us waste more opportunities than we use — will be apt to ascribe most of his blunders to sheer indolence. Sometimes one has omitted to learn what it was needful to learn in order to proceed to action; sometimes one has shrunk from the painful effort required to reflect and decide on one's course, leaving it to Fortune to settle what Will ought to have settled; sometimes one has, from mere self-indulgent sluggishness, let the happy moment slip.

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derivative  
public  
atters.

☞ The difference between men who succeed and men who fail is not so much as we commonly suppose, due to differences in intellectual capacity. The difference which counts for most is that between activity and slackness; between the man who, observing alertly and reflecting incessantly, anticipates contingencies before they occur, and the lazy, easy-going, slowly-moving man who is

roused with difficulty, will not trouble himself to look ahead, and so being taken unprepared loses or misuses the opportunities that lead to fortune. If it be true that everywhere, though perhaps less here than in European countries, energy is the exception rather than the rule, we need not wonder that men show in the discharge of civic duty the defects which they show in their own affairs. No doubt public affairs demand only a small part of their time. But the spring of self-interest is not strong where public affairs are concerned. The need for activity is not continuously present. A duty shared with many others seems less of a personal duty. If a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand other citizens are as much bound to speak, vote, or act as each one of us is, the sense of obligation becomes to each of us weak. Still weaker does it become when one perceives the neglect of others to do their duty. The need for the good citizen's action, no doubt, becomes then all the greater. But it is only the best sort of citizen that feels it to be greater. The Average Man judges himself by the average standard and does not see why he should take more trouble than his neighbours. Thus we arrive at a result summed up in the terrible dictum,

THE ... 4140.

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which reveals the basic fault of democracy, "What is Everybody's business is Nobody's business."

Causes  
which have  
tended to  
make indolence retard  
the growth  
of civic  
duty.

Of indolence, indifference, apathy, in general, no more need be said. It is a sin that easily besets us all. We might suppose that where public affairs are concerned it would decrease under the influence of education and the press. But several general causes have tended to increase it in our own generation, despite the increasing strength of the appeal which civic duty makes to men who are, or if they cared might be, better informed about public affairs than were their fathers.

An indolgent spirit.

The first of these causes is that (manners have grown gentler and passions less angry). A chief duty of the good citizen is to be angry when anger is called for, and to express his anger by deeds, to attack the bad citizen in office, or otherwise in power, to expose his dishonesty, to eject him from office, to brand him with an ignominy which will prevent his returning to any post of trust. In former days indignation flamed higher, and there was little tenderness for offenders. (Jehu smote the prophets of Baal.) Bad ministers — and no doubt sometimes good ministers also — were in England beheaded on Tower Hill. Everywhere punishment

came quicker and was more severe, though to be sure it was often too harsh. Nowadays the arm of justice is often arrested by an indulgence which forgets that the true aim of punishment is the protection of the community. The very safeguards with which our slower and more careful procedure has surrounded trials and investigations, proper as such safeguards are for the security of the innocent, have often so delayed the march of justice that when a conviction has at last been obtained, the offence has begun to be forgotten and the offender escapes with a trifling penalty, or with none. This is an illustration of the principle that as righteous indignation is a valuable motive power in politics, the decline in it means a decline either in the standard of virtue or in the standard of zeal, possibly in both.

Another cause may be found in the fact that the enormous growth of modern states has made the share in government of the individual citizen seem infinitesimally small. In an average Greek republic, he was one of from two to ten thousand voters. In England or France to-day he is one of many millions. The chance that his vote will make any difference to the result is so slender that it appears

vast size  
of modern  
states.

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to him negligible. ) We are proud, and justly proud, of having adapted free government to areas far vaster than were formerly thought capable of receiving free institutions. It was hoped that the patriotism of the citizen would expand with the magnitude of the State. But this did not happen in Rome, the greatest of ancient republics. Can we say that it has happened in the modern world? Few of us realize that though our own share may be smaller our responsibility increases with the power our State exerts. The late Professor Henry Sidgwick once travelled from Davos in the easternmost corner of Switzerland to the town of Cambridge in England and back again to deliver his vote against Home Rule at the general election of 1886, though he knew that his own side would have a majority in the constituency. Those who knew applauded, his opponents included, but I fear that few of us followed this shining example of civic virtue.

indepen-  
ance less  
asy in huge  
immuni-  
28.

Thirdly, the highest, because the most difficult }  
duty, of a citizen is to fight valiantly for his con-  
victions when he is in a minority. ) The smaller the  
minority, and the more unpopular it is, and the more  
violent are the attacks upon it, so much the louder

is the call of duty to defend one's opinions. To withstand the "ardor civium prava iubentium"—to face "the multitude hasting to do evil"—this is the note and the test of genuine virtue and courage. (Now this is, or seems to be, a more formidable task the vaster the community becomes.) It is harder to make your voice heard against the roar of ocean than against the whistling squall that sweeps down over a mountain lake.

Lastly, (there has been within the last century a great accession to our knowledge of nature, a more widely diffused and developed interest in literature and art as well as in science. This development, in itself fraught with laudable means of enjoyment, has had the unforeseen yet natural result of reducing the interest in public affairs among the educated classes, while the ardour with which competitions in physical strength and skill are followed has in like manner diverted the thoughts and attention of the less educated—and indeed, not of them alone but of many also in a class from whom better things might have been expected.) Politics, in fact, have nowadays to strive against more rival subjects attracting men's eyes and minds than they had before scientific discovery and

Other interests competing with politics.

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art, and above all, athletic sports, came to fill newspapers and magazines.

But so far from being less important than they were, politics are growing in every country more important the wider the sphere of governmental action becomes. Nevertheless, even in England, which is perhaps slightly less addicted to this new passion for looking on at and reading about athletic competitions than are North America and Australia, a cricket or foot-ball match or a horse race seems, if one may judge by the eager throngs that snatch the evening newspapers, to excite more interest in the middle as well as in the richer and in the upper section of the poorer classes than does any political event.

'forms in  
which the  
indifference  
to civic  
duty ap-  
pears.

How to overcome these adverse tendencies is a question which I reserve till the last of these lectures. Meantime, let us look at some of the forms in which indifference to the obligations of citizenship reveals itself.

'neglect to  
fight.

The first duty of the citizen used to be to fight, and to fight not merely against foes from another State, but against those also who, within his own State, were trying to overturn the Constitution or resist the laws. It is a duty still incumbent on us

all, though the existence of soldiers and a police force calls us to it less frequently. The omission to take up arms in a civil strife was a grave offence in the republics of antiquity, where revolutions were frequent, as they are to-day in some of the states of Latin America. When respectable people stayed at home instead of taking sword and spear to drive out the adherents of an adventurer trying to make himself Tyrant, they gave the adventurer his chance: and in any case their abstention tended to prolong a civil war which would end sooner when it was seen which way the bulk of the people inclined. There was accordingly a law in some of the Greek republics that every citizen must take one side or the other in an insurrection. If he did not, he was liable to punishment. I have not heard of any one being indicted in England or the United States for failing to discharge his legal duty to join in the hue and cry after a thief, or to rally to the sheriff when he calls upon the *posse comitatus* to support him in maintaining law and order. But possibly an indictment would still lie; and in England we have within recent times enrolled bodies of special constables from the civil population to aid in maintaining public tranquillity.



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Neglect  
o vote.

More peaceful times have substituted for the duty of fighting the duty of voting. But even in small communities the latter duty has been often neglected. In Athens the magistrates used to send round the Scythian bowmen, who acted as their police, to scour the streets with a rope coloured with vermilion, and drag towards the Pnyx (the place of assembly), citizens who preferred to lounge or to mind what they called their own business, as if ruling the State was not their business. So in modern Switzerland some cantons have enacted laws fining those who, without reasonable excuse, neglect to vote.<sup>1</sup> This is the more remarkable because the Swiss have a good record in the matter of voting, better, I think, than any other European people. Such a law witnesses not to exceptional negligence but to an exceptionally high standard of duty. In Britain we sometimes bring to the polls at a parliamentary election eighty, or even more than eighty, per cent of our registered electors, which is pretty good when it is remembered that the register may have been made up eleven months earlier, so that many electors are sure to have moved elsewhere. At elections for

<sup>1</sup> This example has, I believe, been followed in Belgium.

local authorities a much smaller proportion vote; and I fancy, though I have no figures at hand, that in France, Belgium, and still more in Italy the percentage voting at all sorts of elections is less than in Switzerland or in Britain. The number who vote does not perfectly measure the personal sense of duty among electors, because an efficient party organization may, like the Scythian bowmen, sweep voters who do not care but who can be either driven to the polls or paid to go. Unless it is money that takes the voters there, it is well that they should go; for it helps to form the habit.

Another form of civic apathy is the reluctance to undertake civic functions. In England this is not discoverable in any want of candidates for Parliament. They abound, though sometimes the fittest men prefer ease or business success to public life. But seats upon local authorities and especially upon municipal councils and district councils, seldom attract the best ability of the local community. In English and Scottish cities the leading commercial, financial, and professional men do not often appear as candidates, leaving the work to persons who are not indeed incompetent, being usually intelligent business men, but whose edu-

Neglect to seek or to serve in office.

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cation and talents are sometimes below the level of the functions which these bodies discharge. No great harm has followed, because our city councillors are almost always honest. Local public opinion is vigilant and exacting, so a high standard of probity is maintained. But municipalities have latterly embarked on so many kinds of new work, and the revenues of the greater cities have so grown, that not merely business capacity and experience, but a large grasp of economic principles is required. This is no less true here in America, yet I gather that here it is found even more difficult than in Europe to secure the presence of able administrators in city councils. 4740.

A man engaged in a large business who takes up municipal work may doubtless find that he is making a pecuniary sacrifice. But if he has already an income sufficient for his comfort, may it not be his best way of serving his fellow-men?

Many such men do serve as governors or trustees of educational or other public institutions which make nearly as great a demand on their time as the membership of a public body would. Others, in Europe, if less frequently here, give to amusement much more of their leisure than the needs

of recreation and health require. This is often due rather to thoughtlessness than to a conscious indifference to the call of duty. 4740

Some of your political reformers have dwelt on the difficulties which party organizations, specially powerful in the United States, place in the way of educated and public-spirited men seeking to enter politics. There may be truth in this as regards the lower districts of the larger cities, but one can scarcely think it generally true even of the cities. More frequently it is alleged that the work of local politics is disagreeable, bringing a man into contact with vulgar people and exposing him to misrepresentation and abuse.

Excuses  
made for  
failure to  
serve in  
public  
office.

This is an excuse for abstention which ought never to be heard in a democratic country. If politics are anywhere vulgar, they ought not to be suffered to remain vulgar, as they will remain if the better educated citizens keep aloof. They involve the highest interests of the nation or the city. The way in which they are handled is a lesson to the people either in honesty or in knavery. The best element in a community cannot afford to let its interests be the sport of self-seekers or rogues. Moreover, the loss by maladministration or robbery,

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large as it may sometimes be, is a less serious evil than is the damage to public morals. If those who have the manners and speak the language of educated men refuse to enter practical politics, they must cease to complain of a want of refinement in politics. In reality, good manners are the best way in which to meet rudeness; and he who is too thin skinned to disregard abuse confesses his own want of manliness. The mass of the people, even those who are neither educated nor fastidious, know honesty when they see it, and discount such abuse. When a man is firm and upright, nothing better braces him up and fits him to serve his country than to be attacked on the platform or in the press for faults he has not committed. It puts him on his mettle. It toughens his fibre. It gives him self-control and teaches him how to do right in the way which is least exposed to misrepresentation. It nerves his courage for the far more difficult trials which come when friends as well as opponents censure him because honour and obedience to his conscience have required him to take an unpopular line and speak unwelcome truths. A little persecution for righteousness' sake is a wholesome thing.

The deficient sense of civic duty, though most frequently noted in the form of a neglect to vote, is really more general and serious in the neglect to think. Were it possible to have statistics to show what percentage of those who vote reflect upon the vote they have to give, there would in no country be found a large percentage. (Yet what is the worth of a vote except as the expression of a considered opinion?) The act of marking a ballot is nothing unless the mark carries with it a judgment, the preference of a good candidate to a bad one, the approval of one policy offered the people, the rejection of another. The citizen owes it to the community to inform himself about the questions submitted for his decision, and weigh the arguments on each side; or if the issue be one rather of persons than of policies, to learn all he can regarding the merits of the candidates offered to his choice.

Neglect to study and reflect upon public questions.

How many voters really trouble themselves to do this? One in five? One in ten? One in twenty? ✓

It may be asked, How can they do it? What means have they of studying public questions and reaching just conclusions? If the means are wanting, can we blame them if they do not think?

Difficulties that surround the average voter.

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If they feel they do not understand, can we blame them if they do not vote? In every free country the suffrage is now so wide that the great majority of the voters have to labour for their daily bread. In most European countries many are imperfectly educated. In the rural districts they read with difficulty, see either no newspaper or one which helps them but little, lead isolated lives in which there are scanty opportunities for learning what passes, so that the best they can do seems to be to ask advice from the priest, or the village schoolmaster, or take advice from their landlord or their employer. In the northern parts of the United States and also in Canada, the native population has indeed received a fair instruction, and reads newspapers; but the mass of voters is swelled by a crowd of recent immigrants, most of whom cannot read English and know nothing of your institutions.

Broadly speaking, in modern countries ruled by universal suffrage the Average Citizen has not the means of adequately discharging the function which the constitution throws upon him of following, examining, and judging those problems of statesmanship which the ever growing range of

government administration and the ever increasing complexity of our civilization set before him as a voter to whom issues of policy are submitted.

As things stand, he votes, when he votes, not from knowledge, but as his party or his favourite newspaper bids him, or according to his predilection for some particular leader. Unless it be held that every man has a natural and indefeasible right to a share in the government of the country in which he resides, the ground for giving that share would seem to be the competence of the recipient and the belief that his sharing will promote the general welfare. So one may almost say that the theory of universal suffrage assumes that the Average Citizen is an active, instructed, intelligent ruler of his country.<sup>1</sup> The facts contradict this assumption.

Does this mean that widely extended suffrage is a failure, and that the Average Man is not a competent citizen in a democracy?

This question brings us to reflect on another branch of civic duty not yet mentioned. Besides

The duty of the more competent citizens to help the less competent

<sup>1</sup> It may no doubt be argued that even if he is not competent, it is better he should be within than without the voting class. But this was not the ground generally taken by those who brought in universal suffrage.



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the civic duties already described of Fighting, Voting, and Thinking, there is another duty. It is the duty of Mutual Help, the duty incumbent on those who possess, through their knowledge and intelligence, the capacity of Instruction and Persuasion to advise and to guide their less competent fellow-citizens. No sensible man ought ever to have supposed that under such conditions as large modern communities present, the bulk of the citizens could vote wisely from their own private knowledge and intelligence. Even in small cities, such as was Sicyon in the days of Aratus, or Boston in the days of James Otis, the Average Man needed the help of his more educated and wiser neighbours. While communities remained small, it was easy to get this help. But now the swift and vast growth of states and cities has changed everything. Private talk counts for less when the richer citizens dwell apart from the poorer; their opportunities of meeting are fewer, and there is less friendliness, if also less dependence, in the relation of the employed to the employer. Public meetings do not give nearly all that the Average Man needs, not to add that being got together to present one set of facts and arguments and

deliberately to ignore the other, they do not put him in a fair position to judge. Besides, the men who most need instruction are usually those who least come to meetings to receive it.

To fill this void the newspapers have arisen, — Newspapers as guides to political thought. organs purporting to supply the materials required for the formation of political opinion. Whatever the services of the newspaper in other respects, it has the inevitable defect of superseding, with most of those who read it, the exercise of independent thought. The newspaper, — I speak generally, for there are some brilliant exceptions, — is, in Europe even more than here, almost always partisan in its views, often partisan in its selection of facts or at least in its way of stating them. Presenting one side of a case, addressing chiefly those who are already adherents of that side, putting a colour on the events it reports, — it serves up to the reader ideas, perhaps only mere phrases or catch-words, which confirm him in his prepossessions, and by its daily iteration makes him take them for truths. Seldom has he the leisure, still more seldom the impulse or the patience, to scrutinize these ideas for himself and form his own judgment. He is glad to be relieved of the necessity for thinking,

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because thinking is hard work. Indolence again! The habit of mind that is formed by hasty reading, and especially by the reading of newspapers and magazines in which the matter, excellent as parts of it often are, is so multifarious that one topic diverts attention from the others, tends to a general dissipation and distraction of thought. It is a habit which tells upon us all and makes continuous reflection and a critical or logical treatment of the subjects deserving reflection more irksome to us in the full sunlight of to-day than it was to those whom we call our benighted ancestors.

The reading habit."

This is only one form of that supersession of the practice of thinking by the vice commonly called "the reading habit" which is profoundly affecting the intellectual life of our time. Yet as steady thinking was never really common even among the educated, the difference from earlier days is not so correctly described by saying that people think less than formerly, as by noting that while people read more, and while far more people read, the ratio of thinking to reading does not increase either in the individual or in the mass, and may possibly be decreasing. Intelligence and independence of thought have not grown in proportion to the dif-

fusion of knowledge.) The number of persons who both read and vote is in England and France more than twenty times as great as it was seventy years ago. The percentage of those who reflect before they vote has not kept pace either with popular education or with the extension of the suffrage.

The persons who constitute that percentage are, and must for the reasons already given continue for some time to be, only a fraction, in some countries a small fraction, of the voting population. But the fraction might be made much larger than it is. The citizens who stand above their fellows in knowledge and mental power ought to set an example, not only by themselves thinking more and thinking harder about public affairs than most of them do, but also by exerting themselves to stimulate and aid their less instructed or more listless neighbours. The voter, it is said, should be independent. Yes. But independence does not mean isolation. He must not commit his personal responsibility to the keeping of another. Yes. But personal responsibility does not mean the vain conceit of knowledge and judgment where knowledge is wanting and judgment is untrained.

Just as his religion throws upon every Christian

How the  
educated  
citizens  
may lead

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Responsible  
Leadership  
essential in  
popular  
govern-  
ments.

the duty of loving his neighbour and giving practical expression to his love by helping his neighbour, succouring him in the hour of need, trying to rescue him from sin, seeking to guide his steps into the way of peace, so civic duty requires each of us to raise the level of citizenship not merely by ourselves voting and bearing a share in political agitation, but by trying to diffuse among our fellow-citizens whose opportunities have been less favourable, the knowledge and the fairness of mind and the habit of grappling with political questions which a democratic government must demand even from the Average Man. Democracy, they say, is based on Equality. But in no form of government is leadership so essential. A multitude without intelligent, responsible leaders whom it respects and follows is a crowd ready to become the prey of any self-seeking knave. Nor is it true that because men value equality they reject eminence. They are always glad to be led if some one, eschewing pretension and condescension, speaking to them with respect, but also with that authority which knowledge and capacity imply, will point out the path and give them the lead for which they are looking. To do this has

now, in our great cities, become more difficult than it used to be, because men of different classes and different occupations do not know one another as well as they once did, and economic conflicts have made workingmen suspicious. But there are those in our English and Scottish cities who do it successfully, and I have never heard that it is resented. It is largely a matter of tact, and of knowing how to express that genuine sense of human fellowship which is commoner in the richer class than the constraint and shyness that are supposed to beset Englishmen sometimes allow to appear.

If you and we, both here and in Britain, are less active than we should be in this and other forms of civic work, the fault lies in our not caring enough for our country. (It is easy to wave a flag, to cheer an eminent statesman, to exult in some achievement by land or sea.) But our imaginations are too dull to realize either the grandeur of the State in its splendid opportunities for promoting the welfare of the masses, or the fact that the nobility of the State lies in its being the true child, the true exponent, of the enlightened will of a right-minded and law-abiding people. Absorbed

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in business or pleasure, we think too little of what our membership in a free nation means for the happiness of our poorer fellow-citizens. (The eloquent voice of a patriotic reformer sometimes breaks our slumber. But the daily round of business and pleasure soon again fills the mind, and public duty fades into the background of life.) This dulness of imagination and the mere indolence which makes us neglect to stop and think, are a chief cause of that indifference which chokes the growth of civic duty. (It is because a great University like this is the place where the imagination of young men may best be quickened by the divine fire, because the sons of a great University are those who may best carry with them into after life the inspiration which history and philosophy and poetry have kindled within its venerable walls, that I have ventured to dwell here on the special duty which those who enjoy these privileges owe to their brethren, partners in the citizenship of a great republic.)

## II

### PRIVATE SELF-INTEREST AS A HINDRANCE TO GOOD CITIZENSHIP

THE school of political philosophers dominant in France and England a century ago sought to reduce the functions of government to a minimum. To them, the freedom of the individual was the indispensable guarantee for progress and happiness. The less he was interfered with, or superseded, or exposed to competition, by the State, so much the better for him and for it. Some writers of this school went so far as to leave to the State hardly any sphere of action except defence against foreign enemies — a danger which was then believed to be disappearing and which has never seriously threatened the United States — together with the maintenance of law and order at home. The old catchword “Anarchy *plus* a street constable,” expressed this view of the ideal community.

The recent tendency to enlarge the range of governmental action.



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Both in Europe and in America this doctrine was deserted in practice long before it was denied in theory. Some forty years ago the current turned, and has been thereafter running toward a widening of the State's range of action and the multiplying its points of contact with the individual.<sup>1</sup> That it did so silently, and so to speak unconsciously, in England, and even more unconsciously in the United States, shows how strong were the actual forces moving in that direction. Both here and in England the earlier manifestations of the new tendency were defended, or excused, as mere trivial exceptions to a principle still recognized as generally sound. ( But latterly theory has adapted itself to practice ) We see an active propaganda carried on by various groups from various motives, all constantly demanding, and justifying on principle, more and more interference by public authorities with matters formerly left to private enterprise.

Influence of  
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ment of  
State action  
in furnish-

Without disparaging the value of the theoretical arguments employed to recommend or discredit this tendency, we may agree that it must ulti-

<sup>1</sup> This subject has been treated with great knowledge and penetration by Mr. A. V. Dicey in his book entitled *Law and Opinion*.

mately be tested by experience, and that our present experience is too limited to justify general conclusions. But one aspect of the matter which has so far received little attention concerns our present inquiry. I mean the influence which the extension of State action has had upon the part played by private interests in legislation and administration. The more any public authority, be it a county or city, or a State of this Union, or any national government, either itself undertakes, or interferes with the conduct by private persons of, any matter in which money can be either made or spent, the more grounds does it supply to private persons for trying to influence its action in the direction which will benefit such persons. So much the more, therefore, will those persons have a private interest different from the interest of the community, so much the more will they be tempted to raise their voices and give their votes with a view, not to the common good, but to their own pockets.

ing opportunities for making private gain by means of the State.

Never was there a time when or a country where politics were not more or less tainted and perverted by selfish private interests. Kings sought their own personal advantage. So did the rela-

tives and ministers or favourites of kings. So did nobles, so did the members of those small councils through which oligarchies have ruled. The land-owning class, which controlled English legislation in the eighteenth century, thought first of itself, and passed laws to benefit itself. In fact, one of the strongest practical arguments used on behalf of the extension of the suffrage has been that it would secure the general interest of the nation by depriving any class of a predominant influence. And the friends of democracy expected that by setting up the common good as the common aim, the pursuit of selfish purposes, whether by officials or by particular privileged classes, would be discredited and practically banished.

Nevertheless, selfish purposes have continued in all popular governments to determine the action of classes or groups of citizens. They constitute a grave temptation, obscuring with many persons that sense of the duty to think first of the whole community which ought to be the pole star guiding the citizens' course.

Let us note some of the forms in which this evil appears in modern States. They are as many as the ways in which the action of government,

whether legislative or administrative, can affect private pecuniary interests.

Of some old and vulgar forms no more need be said than is sufficient to indicate that these forms have not escaped our recollection. Bribery is one of them. (The taker of a bribe, be he an elector or a member of a legislature, makes an obviously flagrant sacrifice of public duty to personal cupidity.) The briber who tempts him may seem less base, but is even more mischievous, because he affects a wider circle. Yet not long ago — I can myself remember the time — the corruption of a constituency was treated in England as a sort of joke. The humble bribe-taker did not suffer much in the opinion of the class to which he belonged. The rich bribe-giver was not deemed a really black sheep, but only gray, or perhaps a little spotted. Public opinion has within the last thirty years risen. Stringent legislation, the enactment of which witnessed to an improving tone, has attached graver penalties to the offence, although of course it has not been able to prevent voters from being influenced by the recollection, or expectation, of favours from a candidate. There are now-a-days only a very few constituencies in England, and

Various forms in which selfish private interest may pervert civic duty.

The buying of votes.

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none in Scotland, where corruption survives. The different view men have come to take of the practice shows how the law may serve to form popular sentiment and may maintain the ethical standard which it helped to raise.

The incidence of taxes.

I pass to a class of cases in which it is scarcely possible to prevent personal motives from warping the sense of duty to the nation, and which for that very reason presents especial difficulties. Taxes have to be imposed both for national and for local purposes. The widening range of governmental action, both national and local, and the tendency, strong in most European countries, to increase the expenditure on naval and military armaments, make taxation go on constantly rising. (Now, ~~taxes may be so imposed~~ as to press more heavily upon some one class or classes in the nation, less heavily upon the others. (Each class, therefore, has a motive for trying to shift the burden on to the others.) The manual labourers, though of course opposed to a poll tax, are disposed to favour a direct tax upon property or income rather than indirect taxes in the form of duties on imports, because income or property taxes can be most easily levied on the rich, and

can be raised progressively, *i.e.*, in proportion to the wealth of the persons required to pay. The poor escape them, not only because it would seem harsh to charge an income tax on the poor, but also because the expense of collection would be practically prohibitive. Progressive income taxes are much in favour in many of the cantons of Switzerland, and progressive succession duties have been adopted in Great Britain. Such taxation may be entirely right in itself, but the questions connected with it are apt to present themselves to the individual citizen rather as affecting his own pocket than as matters of general policy.

One particular form of taxation specially tends to affect political action. In nearly all countries of Europe, though not in the United Kingdom, duties on imports are imposed not merely for the sake of raising revenue, but in order to check foreign competition in the home market, and thereby to give an advantage to home products. Such duties, since they are deemed to benefit the home producer by more or less keeping out the foreign product, and since they evidently enable him to raise the price of what he sells, are much in

Duties on imports affecting prices.

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favour with the producing classes. Accordingly, the agriculturists in France, a very large part of the population, demand a high tariff on food products brought from abroad. As you know, the German land-owners have fought for years, and fought successfully, to keep up duties on bread-stuffs and bacon, while the working class oppose these duties, because they desire cheap food. Similarly, in both those countries, manufacturers have pressed for high import duties on manufactured goods.

Tariff issues have come to be among the most cardinal issues and the most constant issues in many countries, so that the voter is apt to ask himself not who is the best man to be chosen and what is the best policy for the country, but whether the candidate, be he a good man or a bad one, stands pledged to a high tariff which will put money into his own pocket if he looks at the subject as producer, or will increase the price of the commodities he consumes if his point of view is that of a consumer. Rarely does a voter find any difficulty in convincing himself that what is for his own interest is for the interest of the country. Anyhow he always says so. But every one knows

what a disturbing, and possibly a perverting, influence, these considerations must exercise and do exercise upon the citizen's mind.

In many countries large sums are taken from the public treasury to be spent on public works, the expenditure in the locality, as well as the work itself when completed, being deemed a benefit to the place. There is, therefore, much eagerness to secure appropriations of public money for local objects, such as harbours, piers, canals, roads, and public buildings of various kinds. Accordingly the voters who reside in a place which is trying to secure such an appropriation, are prone to set their private interest as residents, or expectants of wages, before their general duty as citizens. They give their support to the candidate or to the party which seems most likely to procure for them what may really be a needless or wasteful expenditure of public money, or at least an expenditure in so far unfair that the benefit to the locality is no benefit at all to tax payers in other places to whom no corresponding grant is to be made. There are countries in which the distribution of favours by the government to localities is steadily practised as a means of securing votes in particu-

Appropriations to localities for public works.



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lar localities; and this practice may come pretty near to a species of political corruption.

The obtaining of local franchises.

Similar self-regarding motives of a business order operate upon smaller sections of local communities. As we all know, such franchises as the construction of street railways, or water-works or gas-works, for the supply of a city, are often of great value. The directors of a joint stock company seeking to secure such a franchise are tempted to postpone the common interest of the city to their own interest as promoters. They are sometimes not only thus tempted themselves, but disposed to tempt others. The shareholders, who in most European countries are usually numerous, though here the stock of these large undertakings is often in comparatively few hands, think of their dividends and cease to regard the interests of the city with a single eye. When questions arise between the city and the corporation that works their undertaking, they are not impartial, and may seek to bring unfair influence to bear upon elections.)

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ment con-  
tracts.

Modern governments, the governments of cities as well as those of nations, are large employers of labour and large contractors. The more works any

public authority undertakes, the more ships it builds, the more cannon it casts, the more roads it constructs, so much the more numerous are the opportunities for gain to those with whom it deals and to those whom it employs. Whoever has, or seeks to have, dealings with a public authority has a private interest of his own to study and pursue, distinct from, and usually opposed to, the public interest, for he wishes to sell dear and the public wish to buy cheap. The dangers arising from such a private interest were deemed so serious in the case of members of the British Parliament that a statute was long ago passed forbidding contractors with the government to sit in the legislature. But this is evidently only a partial check.

One class who deal with governments need to be specially mentioned; I mean those who sell their labour. They desire higher wages and shorter hours than they might be able to obtain from other employers, with such other favourable conditions as they can secure. In some countries these government servants are numerous enough to affect elections. In one of the Australian colonies, for instance, where the railroads are the property of

Government employees.

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the State, the employees in each electoral area organized themselves to extort from every candidate a promise to vote for raising wages. Where parties were nearly divided, their vote might often be decisive. The pressure thus put upon the legislature proved at first disagreeable and at last intolerable, so a law was passed taking these employees out of the ordinary constituencies where they resided and putting them into two constituencies all by themselves. Thus, while deprived of the inordinate power they had enjoyed, they were given representatives who could present their claims as avowed advocates.<sup>1</sup>

In England the clerks employed in the postal and telegraph services have frequently endeavoured to exert similar pressure at parliamentary elections, to the great inconvenience of the Administration. So, too, the elections in towns where government dockyards are situated have often turned upon the claims of the dockyard workmen to better wages or more favourable conditions. Similarly the persons employed by municipal authorities have in some cities attempted to start a similar agitation.

<sup>1</sup> I have been informed since these lectures were prepared that this law is now no longer in force.

Much disapproval is expressed by the governmental authorities, but the obvious remedy of disfranchising every one who receives any government pay so long as he receives it, including, of course, judges, administrative officials, and members of the military and naval services, has never been resorted to, because the notion that every man has a sort of natural right to vote is now generally diffused, and any administration that proposed to withdraw the electoral franchise from a large class would risk its popularity.

There are many ways in which public legislation may affect for their gain or their loss particular professions or industries, or particular sections of the community. Labouring men may desire laws shortening the hours of labour, or awarding compensation for accidents, or legalizing certain modes of conducting strikes. Employers may object to such laws. Shipowners may protest against the laws regulating the load line and deck cargoes. Railroad directors may resist proposals to impose conditions on the working of their lines or the publication of their accounts, most of all upon the rates of freight they charge; and the shareholders may join in the resistance. Horse

Other ways in which private interests may be affected by legislation.

breeders or saloon keepers may think it in their interest to have horse racing maintained as an attractive sport and may therefore oppose laws seeking to extinguish betting. A recent English instance is illustrative. The businesses of brewing and of distilling have largely passed from private firms into the hands of joint stock companies, so that the persons interested as shareholders in these industries are now very numerous. When measures are proposed in Parliament, proposing to restrict the number of places licensed to sell liquor, the directors of the companies issue circulars calling upon the shareholders to defend their property by putting pressure on Parliament to reject these measures; and it is supposed that the opposition to such bills is thereby greatly strengthened, because not a few legislators may be afraid to lose the votes of the shareholders aforesaid.

There is in our time a great deal of what is called social legislation, directed to securing reforms which cannot but interfere with existing trades. Some of it may be thought to attempt too much. Some goes so far that, being in advance of public opinion, or of public opinion in certain localities, it fails to be enforced, and so does

harm by presenting the spectacle of laws disregarded with impunity. That, however, is beside the present question. What we have here to note is the large number of cases in which private interest may, in the mind of the voters, over-ride considerations of public policy.

One more class of instances deserves attention, viz., the case of persons who have a personal interest in keeping a political party in power. Every government has, besides soldiers and sailors and police and workmen in navy yards or gun factories, a large number of civil employees in its service, from the higher officials in the administrative departments down to clerks and custom-house examiners and letter carriers. In some countries school teachers belong to this category. Adding to all these the persons who are employed by cities, such as engineers, clerks, tax collectors, and adding further the persons who have not got, but desire to have, a post under the central or under a local government, the number of those who have a personal motive for supporting one or other political party may be, at any rate in a constituency where parties are nearly equal, large enough to affect the result of an

The interest of persons employed by government in keeping their party in power.

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election. If these government employees are permanently employed, *i.e.*, not appointed for a term and not dismissible at pleasure, they may be expected to vote like other citizens, because their tenure will not be affected by the vote they give. If, however, they are liable to be dismissed on a change of government, they are usually deemed bound to vote, and probably also to work, for the government actually in power. Presumably they belonged at the time of their appointment to the party which appointed them, and therefore did not change their politics to secure a place. Still, the interest they have in supporting that party, whatever their personal opinions, tends to lessen their independence and to reduce them to the level of voting machines, because their livelihood depends on the government. With them private interest must needs displace civic duty.

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untries.

The status of public servants differs in different parts of Europe. In some their tenure is permanent, and they can vote as they please. This has now become the case in England, where, however, they are very properly forbidden to take any part in party politics,—to canvass, for instance, or to speak at public meetings. Formerly many were

appointed and dismissed on party grounds, but this plan worked so badly that it was by degrees abolished, and abolished with universal approval. Members of Parliament themselves rejoiced to be set free from the importunities of applicants and from the odious task of pushing candidates whose competence they did not know or might even distrust. In Germany, the instinct of loyalty to the Crown or that of deference to authority is said to induce employees usually to support the government. In France they are still generally expected to do so; and although they no longer exert the local pressure which was common under Louis Napoleon and Marshal MacMahon, they sometimes do electoral work for the party in power. Teachers in public elementary schools are said to be active and effective in this way.

As I have referred to France, it may be added that in that country two other motives of interest exist which may affect the citizen's action. The sale of tobacco and of liquor requires a license, and this is apt to be granted as a favour to supporters of the party in power. Although the decoration of the Legion of Honour is, so far as regards its higher ranks, bestowed upon eminent men of all



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parties, yet in the distribution of the lower grades regard is apt to be had to political services. The red ribbon in the button-hole is so much prized in France that this species of patronage is largely used to win or reward political support among men of some local influence.

The result of European experience generally has been to show that the more the administrative service both of the nation and of local authorities is kept entirely apart from politics, so much the better all round. The voter is more free. The official is exposed to less temptation. He is sure to be more trusted. He is likely to be more efficient. I need not tell you, for you all know it, what the situation formerly was in the United States; what evils the "spoils system" used to breed, what efforts were made to get rid of it; how by slow degrees public offices have more and more been taken out of the category of party rewards, and how much good has resulted therefrom. This has been the work partly of an enlightened public opinion, partly of the action of such strong and public-spirited men as President Cleveland and President Roosevelt.

If we desire to estimate the total number, in any

given State, of the citizens whose action on public issues, whether national or municipal, is distorted or depraved by personal self-interest, we must begin by distinguishing the cases in which that interest is solely pecuniary, or otherwise purely selfish, from that larger class in which an interest which is in one sense personal may be advocated also on general grounds of economic or social policy which may appeal to those who have nothing directly to gain or to lose. Labour legislation belongs to this latter category. An Eight Hours law, for instance, or a law making an employer liable to pay compensation to a workman for all accidents, does directly benefit one class, no doubt a very large class. But it may also be recommended as just and beneficial, or censured as unjust and pernicious, to the community at large. A Prohibition law directly affects the makers and sellers of intoxicating beverages, and they may oppose it because it will reduce their profits. But it may be opposed as unduly restricting personal liberty, or as unlikely to be effectively enforced. A teetotaler who has no personal interest in selling or in getting liquor might disapprove it for those reasons. The same may be said of a protective tariff. Some

Proportion of citizens likely to be influenced by private interest.

Two classes to be distinguished.

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consumers who have no personal motive for desiring a duty to be imposed on imported foodstuffs, because they do not produce or sell foodstuffs, are nevertheless Protectionists, for the issue of Free Trade or Protection is one which may be argued on general economic principles. Although manufacturers who profit by protective duties must, of course, feel the influence of personal motives, still they cannot be ruled out of a debate which has large general bearings going beyond the interest of a section. However, when the fixing of a customs tariff comes down to details and the scale has in each case to be settled, we may expect personal interest to be paramount. The Belgian or German manufacturers who sell a particular kind of agricultural machinery may employ comparatively few persons, and their branch of industry may be of no great importance to the nation. But their interest in excluding American competition will be keen, and where self-interest is keenly felt, public interest goes to the wall. They may persuade themselves that the protective duty they desire will benefit the nation at large. But they cannot be deemed impartial judges; and in practice it is seen that those who expect benefit

from such a duty fight fiercely for it. The results of bringing these private interests, enormous in their aggregate, into the field of politics have been too frequently pointed out to need discussion here and now.

If we put aside this large class of persons whose personal interest lies in the scope of issues which may claim to be disputable, apart from personal interest, because they happen to coincide with a policy advocated on general grounds, the percentage of citizens who have selfish reasons to determine their political action becomes small. That percentage includes those who want to have public money expended in their own neighbourhood, those who seek lucrative governmental contracts or public franchises, those who in some other way desire to draw from the public some advantage by private legislation, those who, being servants of a public authority, agitate for higher wages, those who are striving, by voting or by working for a party, to win, or to keep, public office. It may be thought that these persons, taken all together, are too trifling a part of the electorate to affect the course of politics, or lower the level of good citizenship in the nation.

Percentage  
of citizens  
liable to be  
affected by  
private in-  
terests.

Why the  
class  
affected  
by selfish  
interests,  
though  
small, is  
important.  
Energy of  
self-  
interest.

Numerically they are insignificant. Their importance arises from two facts. One is the keenness of their selfish interest. The other is the secrecy of the means to which most of them resort. These men, and especially those who promote private bills or intrigue to secure contracts and franchises, have a spur of self-interest which sharpens their ingenuity and keeps them incessantly active. They are too strong for the ordinary citizen. His individual personal interest in efficient government and cheap government is slender. A rise in city taxation which may result from the improvident grant of a franchise or a corruptly placed contract, will make only an infinitesimal difference to him. The bad city administration he will receive at the hands of incompetent men put into office for political reasons will only occasionally touch him. But to the man who wants a contract or a franchise the getting of it means wealth and influence. He becomes strenuous and adroit. He is like a professional golfer pitted against you or me. He "wins all the time."

Secrecy.

The men who are "after money," — and this is largely true also of the men who are after office, where it is the reward of political work — prefer

to pursue their object by covert means. Many are the kinds of influence, political, personal, pecuniary, they can bring to bear. Those who expect to make a fortune out of the public are willing to spend freely to over-reach the public. The least part of the harm done is the pecuniary loss the public suffers. Far worse is the example which the successful tempter sets and the demoralization which he spreads.

Even the purchase of political support in a locality by spending money there on public works, a thing said to be frequent in Italy, and not unknown in some British colonies, is not only discreditable to the politicians who practise it, but involves some dereliction of duty on the part of the local citizens who give their votes in a particular way because money is coming to the locality. It lowers the moral standard of the administration that consents to spend the money, of the member who procures the grant, of the constituency that receives it.

It has been said that the evil most generally incident to modern democratic states, and most characteristic of modern as distinguished from ancient democracy, is the tendency to turn govern-

The Power of Money is a danger besetting popular governments.

mental action to private ends.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps with even more general truth may it be said that as the Love of Money is the root of all evil, so the Power of Money is for popular governments the most constant source of danger, worse than ignorance, worse than apathy, worse than faction, worse than demagogism. This is because it is so multiform, so insidious, so hard to detect, so quick to spread. You may remark that among the average voters there are comparatively few who have anything to gain from the government. Indolence affects more people than selfish interest does. But where the influence of sordid personal aims is felt, it is more harmful. Moreover it tells chiefly on the class whose wealth or education or connection with public affairs makes them prominent.

Results of  
a low stand-  
ard in the  
leading  
class.

Those men constitute what may be called the Tone-Setting class, by which I mean the class which from its social authority as well as its intelligence and power forms the standard not only for those who conduct public business but also to a great extent for the whole community. Such

<sup>1</sup> Although the debasement of politics by private interests never appeared on a more tremendous scale than in the struggle for office, and for provinces as a means of enrichment, which went on in the later days of the Roman republic.

a class ought to set a high standard. When it, or any considerable part of it, sets a low standard and admits or tolerates in public life motives and methods which would be condemned in private life, it depraves the morality of the community, and thus the stream is poisoned at its source and politics are defiled and debased, selfishness and trickery are taken to be natural, and public life becomes the favourite hunting ground of unscrupulous or reckless men. The republic of Rome in the last century of its life is the most familiar example of these evils.

Philip of Macedon used to say that he could take any city into which he could drive an ass laden with gold. Modern governments control enormous pecuniary interests and the men who administer the government are often poor. Considering the temptations which wealth can offer it is creditable to most of our modern democracies that they have on the whole maintained a pretty high standard of honour. But the danger is ever present. Once the moral standard is allowed to sink, the task of restoring it becomes a hard task, harder than that of rousing a people from indolent indifference, for a national crisis, a real



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issue which comes suddenly and thrills all hearts, may do this, while moral decay, eating into the national character, destroys the very sentiments to which the reformer has to appeal. A nation may be stirred to splendid effort by schemes of conquest or by the need for self-defence, and yet remain the prey of sordid interests.

Publicity  
is a weapon  
against the  
power of  
money.

To eliminate from politics the money power with the rapacity which moves it and the selfishness on which it plays, ought to be a first aim of all patriotic citizens. Publicity is the most generally available means of effecting this. In free countries, the people are rightly jealous of the power of wealth, and the better its methods are known the less dangerous does it become. But on the general principle that prevention is better than cure, it is much to be desired that legislation and administration should offer the fewest possible facilities for enabling men to grow rich by their dealings with the public or through special provisions of the law. The difficulty of limiting these facilities is so great and with the increase of governmental action becomes daily so much greater, as to make a sweeping application of this doctrine seem to be a Counsel of Perfection. Nevertheless, the more broadly it is applied the better.

The two best and purest democratic States of recent times have been those two in which the administration was most cheaply conducted and which gave the fewest opportunities to their citizens of using government as a means for gain. But I must add that in one of these republics, the Orange Free State, there were no men, in the other, Switzerland, there are very few men, rich enough to be able to pervert either administration or legislation, or before whose eyes large temptations glittered.

The Orange Free State and Switzerland.

Our consideration of the part played in politics by self-regarding interests suggests a reflection with which this lecture may close.

The chief issues which have divided nations and given rise to political conflict have belonged to one or other of four classes. There have been strifes of different races or class-groups within the same State. There have been quarrels of religion. There have been struggles over political power between those who held it as their exclusive possession and those who sought to be admitted to share it. There have been struggles between different economic classes in which the poorer strove to improve by legislation their material

Nature of the issues on which political contests have generally turned.

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condition, as, for instance, to obtain possession of land or to shake off burdensome taxes. The three former kinds of conflict have now almost passed away from west and middle European countries with the cooling of religious passion and the democratization of nearly all States. There remain only conflicts of the fourth kind, which turn upon material conditions, and which tend to become struggles between the richer and the poorer classes. The efforts of the latter to better their lot in the world have often caused and sometimes justified revolutions, and several long steps in human progress have been marked by their success. The liberation of the French peasantry from the sort of serfdom in which many of them had remained, was one of the best results of the movement that overthrew the old French monarchy. Through a more peaceful series of political struggles and changes the British legislature has bettered during the last forty years the condition of the peasantry in Ireland, and ~~has~~ given to the masses of the British people the inestimable benefits of untaxed food and a system of universal public education.

Unavoidable as are these struggles between the more and less wealthy parts of the community,

it is unfortunate when they become the chief issues in politics and draw the lines by which parties are divided. Every free people may well say with the Hebrew sage, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." The ideal condition for a State would be that in which the fortunes of its members were pretty nearly equal. Aristotle tells us that power is most safely lodged in the hands of the citizens of moderate means, who have no motive for plundering the rich and are not likely to be plundered by the poor. This class, he thinks, is less tempted to show insolence. Neither does it excite envy. And Plato, deploring the intestine strife which tore Greek republics, explains it by observing that in every city there are two cities, the Rich and the Poor.

Evils to be expected when the main political issues are those between rich and poor.

Where a small body of rich men are set over against a large body of poor men, both having equal political rights, the majority will naturally be tempted to use their power to secure economic benefits for themselves. When this goes so far that the rich form one party and the poor another, there being comparatively few of middling fortune between the two, the temptation to the latter to throw undue burdens on the former, and the con-

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sequent temptation to the former to defend themselves by those illegitimate means which wealth provides, will seldom be resisted. In former days such a conflict of interest and parties used to end in a clash of arms. Even where the strife is carried on by constitutional methods the community will hardly escape unscathed. Class hatreds are embittered. Confidence is weakened. Capital may be driven out of the country, or may try to save itself by methods of corruption which demoralize public life.

In England  
political  
divisions  
have rarely  
allowed  
economic  
ness.

Nothing, therefore, is more to be desired than that in every free government the lines which divide political parties should not be the lines which divide the richer from the poorer. It was the good fortune of England that the Whig party, which from the time of Charles the Second onwards was, generally speaking, the advocate of popular rights, included a large section of the gentry, some even among the great land-owners, and a still larger proportion of the well-to-do commercial class, while the Tory or Conservative party included plenty of the poorer citizens. Thus those who were usually the advocates of political reform and champions of freedom were led to proceed cautiously and had a respect,

perhaps sometimes an undue respect, for what are called the rights of property, and for vested rights generally. So also in the United States the lines of political parties have run quite across those lines by which men are classified according to property. Neither the Republicans and Federalists of your early days, nor the Democratic Republicans and Whigs of your second period, nor the Democrats and Republicans of the last fifty years, have ever been associated with the claims and efforts either of the richer or of the poorer classes. This means that neither in England nor in the United States has self-interest in its more sordid form of the selfish assertion of pecuniary interest, been a mainspring in the machinery of political life. Those who attacked the existing state of things, those who resisted proposals to change it, have been actuated by many motives. Self-interest has been present, has indeed been more or less constantly active. But it has never, been consciously dominant. Neither has justice, nor the interest of the whole nation, been, in the minds of either set of partisans, been subordinated to the gain they expected to secure for themselves.

This still  
more true of  
the United  
States.

That the mass of the poor should in the United

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States come to form one party, and the mass of the rich another, seems highly improbable. You have what Aristotle desired, the decisive voice lodged in an enormous body of citizens, well-to-do town workers and small rural land-owners, who possess enough property to be inclined to disapprove and oppose measures of a revolutionary kind. This body of intelligent and steady men, who have something to lose, yet are not interested in maintaining abuses or excusing evasions of the law contrived by unscrupulous wealth, bridges the chasm between the extremes of wealth and poverty. The same holds true of Canada. It is less true of most European countries.

Serious as are the economic problems which now confront all civilized nations, the conditions which you in North America enjoy, and the traditions you have inherited, may well encourage you to look forward to their peaceful solution by constitutional means. But all other nations, have already found that you must guard yourselves against the insidious power of money, which knows how to play upon the self-interest of voters and legislators, polluting at its source the spring of Civic Duty.

### III

#### PARTY SPIRIT AS A HINDRANCE TO GOOD CITIZENSHIP

THOSE who have written on the philosophy of politics or of history have usually placed the spirit of Party among the hindrances to good citizenship. I have followed the custom in so placing it for our consideration this evening. But is it really a hindrance? Some may deem it to be just as much a help, a means of instruction, or a stimulus to action. Anyhow, does not experience show it to be indispensable? .

Very different views have been taken of the worth and results of Party as a motive force in politics. Philosophers, treating the matter in their idealistic and abstract way, and recording the violence of civil strife, have condemned it altogether. They call it the curse. They point out how it blinds men to the truth, how it incites them to mutual hatred, substitutes the interest of a section for that of the nation, engenders seditious

Different  
views en-  
tertained  
regarding  
Party and  
Party  
Spirit.



and conspiracies, treasons and rebellions. The classic description — and a terrible description it is — of the excesses into which the spirit of faction drives men, perverting or destroying the principles of morality, and the ordinary instincts of human nature, is that given by Thucydides in the Third Book of his History, where he narrates the massacres in Coreyra.

Practical politicians, on the other hand, especially in England and America, have little but praise for party spirit. It supplies the motive power in free governments. It enables men to work together. It "brings out the vote." I remember that nearly forty years ago, being in the company of Robert Lowe, then a member of Mr. Gladstone's first Cabinet, and the talk turning on the difficulties in the way of Parliamentary business, something was said deploring the vehemence of party spirit. Lowe promptly replied, "I wish we had much more of party spirit. There isn't enough." We saw that what he said was an unquestioning support from the Bench in the House of Commons, and no doubt he was right. That was what the Ministry did want, and what every Ministry wants. As lawyers say that it is more important that the law

should be certain than that it should be just, so a statesman, even a philosophical one such as Lowe was, might well hold that it was better that the party which constituted the majority of the House should steadily and heartily support the Executive through thick and thin than that the members of this majority should think more of truth than of party, each man or group voting according to his or its own view of what was right.

Those philosophical writers who have also been immersed in practical politics, have, like Edmund Burke, the greatest among them, while recognizing the necessity for Party as a means of government, usually distinguished its legitimate from its perverted forms. (Burke defines it as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some point in which they are all agreed." It is, in the view of such writers, legitimate and useful when it is based on a principle and embodies a doctrine. It becomes illegitimate when it blindly follows a leader or committee in the efforts of a group to seize or keep political power, or perhaps some other more distinctly material benefit.) Its worth is in any given case to be tested by inquiring whether in each case it does or does not

Better and worse forms of Party.

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stand for a genuine principle or line of policy honestly advocated as being for the good of the community.

Party in  
the ab-  
stract and  
the con-  
crete.

A Party appears under analysis to be a complex sort of thing, in which the abstract or subjective side and the concrete or objective side do not necessarily correspond. It is abstract so far as it represents the common adhesion of many minds to one set of opinions. It is concrete in respect of its consisting of a number of men who profess to be acting together because they hold or say that they hold those opinions. But these men may practically be indifferent to the opinions they appear to stand for, and may be really bound together by other motives and feelings which have little to do with the party tenets. Thus the concrete reality of the party as embodied in its members may be different from the description any one would give of it who knew only its history and its formal declarations of principle.

Party, being a natural offspring of the conditions under which popular governments have to be worked, is coloured and moulded by certain permanent tendencies of human nature and especially of the four following — to wit:

Sympathy,  
 The disposition to imitate,  
 The liking for association,  
 The love of a fight.)

These tendencies are intermingled, in each group and indeed in each individual, in varying proportions, some being more prominent in one person or group, some in another. So, too, what we call Party Spirit is itself, as the result of these tendencies, a singular blend of Thought and Emotion, the element of reason and that of feeling being present in very different relative strength in different persons.)

Let us see how Parties are formed. In every community there must needs be diversities of view regarding public matters. Leading men become the exponents of opposed views. Other men fall in behind them, professing agreement. To gather adherents and to make their views prevail they combine and organize. Forthwith a Party emerges. The matter in dispute need not be important and may be anything in the world. It may be something which is at first quite apart from politics. Religious quarrels, family quarrels, a rivalry between two prominent men for a particular post, attachment to one or other side in some competitive

Mode in  
 which  
 Parties are  
 formed.

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game or sport, have sometimes started the Party, which has presently become committed to a set of political tenets. A party may be built on any foundation; wood or stubble will do as well as rock. Once it is formed, its members acquire the habit of thinking and acting together in many things besides those which originally drew them together. Once alive, nothing is more tenacious of life. Often it tends to become hereditary, especially in the ruder states of society. It may continue to live by its traditions, by its war-cries, even by its hatreds, when it has long outlived its doctrines and its usefulness.

Since we are going to examine in what way Party Spirit may become an obstacle to the discharge of civic duty, let us begin by admitting its merits and recognizing the sort of necessity that has produced it.

Political  
needs which  
give birth  
to Party.

Party has been a practical necessity — and I am not now speaking of the natural human tendencies that create it, and shape it, but of the political circumstances that call it into being — because in a large, free community, where each man has his own affairs to occupy him, there must be some means of bringing current questions to the knowledge of the citizens, of explaining their meaning

and purport, of presenting and advocating particular proposals for handling current issues. The larger the community grows, the greater the need for this. Accordingly, those who think together and wish to act together must organize; and their organization becomes a party.

The need  
for rousing  
public  
interest.

Furthermore, in a large community the great bulk of the citizens do not and hardly can know who are their best men, the fittest to think, to lead, to be selected for office. When persons have to be chosen by vote to hold office, there must be some means of recommending them and getting the electors, some of whom will be remiss, or heedless, or ignorant, to come and vote for them. Where the community is a very large one, or where the structure of society does not indicate particular persons as *prima facie* fit men for office, there must be some means of selecting particular persons to be candidates, else voting will be random. A party organization supplies these means. This function of nominating increases not only the range of its action, but its power, because ambitious men become forthwith eager to control it and to develop it for their own purposes.

The selec-  
tion of  
candidates.

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An instance of the difficulty in large constituencies of knowing for whom to vote.

Where the posts filled by election do not carry much distinction and are not greatly sought after, the member of a large community may find it hard to know whom to vote for. London, while governed for certain common purposes by a body called the County Council, is divided for other local purposes into a large number of boroughs, each administered by its Borough Council.<sup>1</sup> The candidates for seats on these Councils are mostly men of so little personal eminence that one may reside in a borough during a lifetime and have never heard their names. Not long ago at an election for the London borough in which I had lived for many years, a long list of candidates was issued, which I studied carefully, seeking, as a citizen ought, to vote for the best men. There was but one name I had ever seen before. It was that of a man who had won fame by his classical attainments at Cambridge University and afterwards become one of our leading English scholars. Having nothing else to guide me, except suggestions from private acquaintances or from party organization, I voted for

<sup>1</sup> The Ancient City, a small area within the now vast London, retains its ancient government and is not subject to the County Council.

him, and for some of those other men on the same list who appeared, so far as I could gather, to be associated with his candidacy. I happened to know that he was a man not only of learning, but of the highest personal character, but had I known nothing except that he was a distinguished Homeric scholar, I should have had to vote for him just the same, in default of all other data for a judgment, and not happening to know anybody to whom I could apply for information with a certainty of getting it.

In such a case, though the principles of our political parties have nothing to do with the questions that arise in borough administration, it might have been helpful to have had the candidates recommended by a party rather than to have no means of knowing anything about their respective merits. Better still, of course, would it have been to have them introduced by a committee of the best leading citizens. Though, men whose names would have carried weight.

If parties existed, as they do not exist, solely for the purpose of promoting the public welfare by advocating views and proposals deemed to be



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The nature  
and com-  
ponent  
elements of  
Party  
spirit.

conducive to that welfare, Party Spirit could hardly do mischief. It would then be nothing more than zeal for doctrines held to be true and wholesome. But in fact parties exist for other reasons and the spirit that moves them ceases to be regardful solely or even mainly of the public weal.

This appears when we consider what are the forces of sentiment that hold a party together. One is faith in the principles it professes. Another is attachment to its leaders. A third is the desire to see the party strong and successful. A fourth is the love of combat, the wish, not merely to succeed, but to fight with and overcome the opposing party. This last mentioned element in Party Spirit is pretty conspicuous in Englishmen, Irishmen, and Americans, and gives to elections the vivacity which makes their charm. During the later hours of election it is supreme; the merits of the issues forgotten, and each side fights to win.

variations  
in the  
strength  
of these  
elements.

The extent of each of these several sentiments, which together make up Party Spirit, exists in any given party, is constantly varying. Sometimes devotion to leaders, sometimes an-

tagonism, rising into hatred, to the opposite party, acquires a strength out of all proportion to the interest felt in the principles and tenets of the party. It may happen that passion and principles are powerful in an inverse ratio. But it may also happen that when there is little passion there is also little thought or care for the doctrines of the party, because the organization stands simply as an organization. The party may have drifted from its old moorings and ceased to care for its old doctrines, but may still hold together as a concrete body which desires to maintain its ascendancy in the nation, its leaders having a strong interest in that ascendancy.

However, this is not the place for a Natural History of Party, fascinating as the subject is. We are now considering only the effects of Party Spirit on Civic Duty, having to examine the allegation that it seduces the citizen from sound and candid judgment.

There are endless instances that the spirit of party may be so diverse from its original character of an attachment to certain principles as to become a mere instinct of loyalty to a leader, or to a name, or to a set of catchwords. Then

the dominant desire is to win the game and defeat the antagonists. (When it is thus transformed, it may supersede independent thought and conscientious purpose in the citizen's mind. Allegiance to the party replaces loyalty to the nation. Victory, not truth, becomes the aim; and the victory is less that of a doctrine than of a man or a group. Measures are judged not on their merits, but according to the quarter they proceed from. Sometimes strife grows so bitter that fellow-citizens of the opposite party are treated as enemies rather than partners in a common state. Each party hates and reviles the standard bearers of the other. Hostility may go so far as to distract the counsels of the State and expose it to foreign intrigue or invasion.)

Recognizing this liability to perversion which inheres in Party Spirit, let us see how it may become a hindrance to good citizenship, even in that milder aspect which it wears in the more advanced parts of the Republic, for in some of the smaller southern countries those harsher lineaments to which I have referred may still be discerned. Suppose an ordinary honest citizen to be considering how he shall vote on some public issue. Presumably

he belongs to one party, and prefers to continue to support that party. If he finds his own opinion on the question, be the question that of a legislative proposal or that of the election of a particular person, to coincide with his party's opinion, all is simple. If, however, he differs in opinion from his party, what is his action likely to be and what ought it to be?

In four cases out of five (perhaps more), the Average Man will simply follow his party, not troubling himself to examine the matter. The party has done the thinking and made the decision. That is enough for him.

If, however, being a somewhat more active or conscientious citizen than is the Average Man, he examines the issue for himself, and concludes that his party is wrong, the question follows whether he shall be ruled by his own opinion, or subordinate it to that of the party.

Let us distinguish the case of the conscientious citizen, who is only a private in the army, having nothing to do but cast his vote in the case of the prominent conscientious citizen, who is an officer, perhaps a colonel, or even a general in that army. The conscientious citizen, who is what I call a private,

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will usually hesitate to desert his party. He is bound to it by habit and by a preference for its leaders over those of the other side. It is unpleasant to support by his vote those whom he has hitherto opposed, and he hates to be regarded by his party associates as a deserter. Nevertheless, the voice of duty seems to require him to obey his convictions. He may, and if the issue is an important one, he probably will, being *ex hypothesi* conscientious, and in this instance convinced, ultimately follow it. But he has not been, and cannot be, a detached and impartial judge in the matter.

Let us, however, suppose the citizen to be a leader in his party, not necessarily one of the chieftains, but so far a prominent politician that others look to him and that his own political future is bound up with the party fortunes. To such an one it is not so hard to form or give effect to a perfect and sound opinion. His career may be at stake, he may be exposed to censure, perhaps to ridicule, on his own side if he forsakes the support he receives from the other side; those complaints and his candour which are even more deadly than abuse. The entrance into the matter of his personal interest, as a man having a

political reputation and career, cannot but affect his judgment.

Other considerations come in to confuse the issue. A man prominent in his party may think that the good he can do by remaining in it and trying to back it up, so that it may fight effectively in other then pending questions, outweighs the harm he will do by voting on this particular instance against his own conviction. Or he may value so highly the influence of his party on the welfare of the nation, and may so much fear to weaken it by helping to expose it to defeat on this particular issue, that it will in the particular case seem right to do what would otherwise be wrong for the sake of the greater good to follow from keeping the party in power.

Though a politician may of course use such arguments as these to deceive himself, if any line of action his interest prompts, they are arguments which have their weight and deserve to be considered by men of good right. Much depends on the gravity of the issue. If it is one profoundly affecting the national welfare, the statesman must at all hazards follow his conscience. If it is of passing and secondary con-

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sequence, he may feel it his duty to forego his own views for the sake of the party. Most cases lie between these extremes. They are not easy even for the ordinary voter who has nothing to lose or gain, while for the political leader they are far harder, not only because his personal interest is involved, but also because he sees more of the general conditions of party government and can survey the whole field of politics.

In England, for instance, which I take because I know it best, our system of Cabinet and Parliamentary Government rests on Party. Without stable parties, commanding the habitual allegiance of a body of electors in the country, and receiving the habitual support of their adherents in the House of Commons, the business of the country could not go on. If the majority which supports the Ministry in the House were to be always changing, voting with them one day and against them the next, they would have no chance of doing anything. Indeed, they could not stay in office at all. A member of the House cannot always vote according to his personal convictions. He must support the Ministry, not only because his constituents sent him there to

stand by it upon the main lines of policy, but also because it is more important to maintain a strong Executive and make its policy consistent and continuous than it is to please one's self by always following one's own views.

This general principle is — I am still speaking of the British Parliament — subject to two exceptions. In small matters, not affecting the fate of a Ministry, the member has some latitude, can now and then oppose Ministers, and may benefit them by doing so, because he apprises them of the diversities of view among their followers, and warns them not to put too severe a strain on party loyalty. I remember, when a private member, to have often told the government Whips that I was doing better for them by voting against them than by voting with them; and sometimes (not indeed always, to be sure), they admitted this to be true. In great matters, where the welfare of the country may be involved, he must put that welfare first, above party loyalty, and be prepared to vote against the Ministry rather than with it. *Mutatis mutandis*, similar considerations apply to the action, though, of course, to a much smaller extent, of the private members of the Opposition



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party in Parliament, for the leaders of the Opposition, being presumably the persons out of which the next Ministry will be formed, hold a position of high responsibility, and are deemed entitled to the support of their party.

The questions of honour and duty that arise under our conditions of parliamentary government in England are infinitely perplexing. The experience of one who sat for five years as a private member in the House of Commons was that in nearly every week there arose more cases of conscience to settle as to what was the right course to take in voting in a division than had arisen every year during all the time when he practised law as a barrister. One soon learns not to worry over these things; it is seldom that one vote makes a difference to the parliamentary result, though of course it may make a difference to a member's own future. When a man becomes a member of the Administration, the conditions are such that though questions of conscience arise, they do not arise so often, but he must at all hazards keep together (the proper course when a minister disagrees from his colleagues) is justified only by the gravest differences of opinion.

Lord Melbourne is said to have once observed, "The supporters I value are those who will support me when I am wrong. Any one can support me when I am right." The saying may seem cynical, but those who know practical politics will recognize a truth in it. It may be proper sometimes to follow a leader whom in a particular issue you think mistaken. In political life there is seldom an absolutely right and an absolutely wrong course. The choice is usually between that which is somewhat the worse and that which is somewhat the better. You may think your party is committing an error and wish to dissociate yourself from that error. But if you quit your party, you lose such chance as you have of saving it from other errors. If your vote helps to turn it out of office, the consequences of bringing in the other party may be more disastrous to the country, for the errors you think it necessary to commit may be far more serious. It may be a maxim with some of the private members in the House of Commons, while it was sometimes right to be necessary to vote against the Government, it was very seldom right to vote against the Government along

with the Opposition, because our views on general policy differed so profoundly from those of the latter, that if we went along with them on a particular division, it was quite probable that we might, however innocently, be taking a course harmful to our own principles. We were, so to speak, freshmen in Parliament, and were modest, as freshmen ought to be, and we felt that the "old hands" of the Opposition might see further into a political situation than we did, and we might be furthering what we thought their pernicious purposes with the help which our simplicity gave.

Whoever holds a more or less leading position in politics — and a member of a legislative body may be deemed a leader when compared with the ordinary private citizen — is perhaps less liable to be carried away by Party Spirit than is the average member of a party, because he is behind the scenes, and is more likely to know the seamy side of things. When, then, if a man of any thinking and independence likes the line which he sees the most prominent figures) to be taking, he can stand pretty free from mere partisan bias or prepossession. The most incisive

criticism of party blunders is usually to be heard in the inner councils of the party; and party leaders are the last people to be blind to one another's faults. But to the average party man, especially if he be a local worker, eager for the success of his own side, party is apt to become a fetish. He shouts for it, he canvasses for it, he supports it without stopping to think whether it is right or wrong. So the ordinary citizen who has all his life belonged to the party, is glad to be relieved of the trouble of thinking for himself, shuts his eyes, and goes forward with a rush. It is chiefly among these well-meaning, heedless men that Party Spirit substitutes passion or habit for independent reflection. It is they who, honest and well intentioned as they may be, fail to apply a candid mind to the merits of measures and the characters of men.

So far we have been considering national rather than local politics. A word must now be said about local, and especially municipal, politics. Here in the United States the municipal elections turn on party seems to be the rule in cities but much less frequent in the suburbs and in local government, and sometimes the case even in State elections held in those areas. I understand

that in electing representatives to the State Legislature from your towns in Connecticut it often happens that little regard is had to party. In England municipal elections are frequently, perhaps in about half or two-thirds of the boroughs, fought on party lines. In Scotland party feeling comes very much less into them. In Ireland they are almost always political. Now the principles which national parties profess have seldom, in any country, a real bearing on municipal issues. What a city wants is, first and foremost, honest and capable men. Whether they are Tories or Liberals makes no practical difference. It is sometimes said that by running city elections on party lines better men can be induced to stand for office, because they get an opportunity of making themselves known, and because the party indorsement furnishes a certain guarantee of their merits. Nevertheless, our English experience suggests that Party Spirit is a great hindrance to the best results of city elections. It distracts the attention of electors from considering those personal qualities which ought to be the basis of choice. It is more likely to tend to jobbery than to any diminution of that vigilant and impartial criticism of municipal administration which

is needed to maintain efficiency as well as purity. If a political party has put a man into office, it is apt, when his conduct is impugned, to think itself bound to stand up for him and see him through, whereas he ought to be judged simply by his conduct and neither by his political opinions nor by his affiliations.

This definite conclusion, drawn from our British experience, I can accordingly give you. — The less national politics in city elections the better.

But if you ask for definite conclusions as to the use and abuse of Party Spirit in national affairs, all I can do is to indicate on the one side the dangers that attend it, and on the other the difficulty of dispensing with such a motive power. The case is like that of the Roman poet who said to the provoking lady he loved, *Nec cum te possum vivere, nec sine te*. Party spirit has at least this merit as compared with Indolence or Apathy, that it does not neglect the interest of the citizen. It is more malicious than Selfish Interest, because it is more active. It is the excess — an excess which is liable to run to an extreme — of a feeling which is both good and wholesome. Exactly how far it should be allowed to fill one's mind and guide one's action

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is a matter on which no rule can be laid down. Each man must exercise his common sense and deal with each case as it arises, trying to be honest, but not splitting hairs, for fine-drawn casuistry defeats itself.

Although practical politicians are always extolling the obligations of party loyalty, they admit that there are cases in which a man must forsake his party; for we in Europe observe that they frequently appeal, especially on the eve of an election, to the "moderate and reasonable men" on the other side in politics to put the interests of the nation above party, to abandon their own leaders, who are (so it is alleged) sacrificing those interests, and to cast a vote, if only for this once, for the party to which the speaker belongs. Such speakers must sometimes wish that they could address the other side in the same language which their own friends did not use. I have been told that in the Highlands the sheep-owners are shepherds who keep two dogs, one of which they talk English, to the other of which they never myself seen these dogs, (I have never seen them.) When the flock of sheep, scattered all over the side of a mountain, has to be gathered and driven to a point halfway up the slope,

the shepherd shouts to one of the dogs in Gaelic, bidding him drive the upper sheep down, and to the other dog in English, bidding him drive the lower sheep up. Each dog understands the orders given in the tongue he comprehends and there is no confusion.

Independence is a good thing; conscience a vital thing. Politics would soon become rotten if the citizens did not exercise their own judgment, and keep in check that instinct of association which makes the strength of Party Spirit. But one must also beware of magnifying small differences, of indulging the habit and exaggerating the tone of independence, into which there may possibly enter a spice of vanity and self-importance. You will sometimes see a man of ability and courage who effects less than he ought to do in the world because he finds it hard to work with others, and lets divergencies of opinion on secondary issues isolate him from his party.

There is a perspective in politics. The man to whom small things near the eye seem to be big, becomes what you in America call a Crank. We have not got the name in England, but we, like all other nations, have got the thing. He has often hit



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is a good idea, but he sees things out of perspective, attaching such undue importance to his own pet notions as to make "fads" of them, and thus to become an obstacle to real work. St. Paul complimented his Corinthian converts on their "suffering fools gladly." It is hard to suffer cranks gladly, for they are impracticable persons, who while they explain their own views at inordinate length, will seldom try to understand your arguments and are all the more provoking because their intentions are usually excellent. Yet they ought to be borne with, for the propensity to mere imitation is so common, and independence of thinking is so rare, that much must be pardoned to those who break the monotony of ordinary opinion. Moreover, the longer we are in politics, the more do we realize that our judgment is fallible. Practical politicians are apt to be too impatient of what seems unpractical. Some of those so-called cranks for whom their own contemporaries "had no use," proved in the end to have been the pioneers in great reforms.

Another class of men are sometimes hard to bear with; I mean those detached and highly superior critics who censure most of what the practical man does, but do not step down to help him. Here especially I notice that such critics

are found exasperating and called sometimes cynical, sometimes kid-gloved, and sometimes "goody goody." But they too have their use and must be listened to. People who stand out of the dust of practical politics sometimes see things more clearly than those who are in the middle of the fray. We should get on worse without the critics, for their criticisms often strike nearer to the truth than do those of political opponents, who are thinking only of scoring a party advantage, and who so overstate their case that we fail to recognize such truth and worth as there may be in it.

Hard as it is for a member of a Cabinet or a Legislature to steer his course aright between an angular and unpractical independence on the one hand, and slavish obedience to party on the other, the difficulty is not very great for that Average Citizen, who has been all through most in our mind. For him to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Let him remember that Party is not an End but a Means. Let him absolutely refuse to vote for a dishonest man, unless perhaps when he knows the other candidate to be even more dishonest. When he feels himself at variance with his party on an important issue, let him consider whether or no it is the leading

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issue of the election. When he feels vexed with his party for the action they have been taking, let him ask himself whether his disapproval is given on general public grounds or in respect of some ground peculiar to himself as to which he may have a bias of interest or sentiment. These questions, if not always easy, are easier to answer than are those which trouble the leader. If our well-meaning Average Man realizes the danger of yielding himself up to party spirit and neglecting the duty of judging for himself, he need not go far wrong. The advice which Speaker Reed is reported to have given to a young friend in Maine, "See which crowd has the honestest men and vote with it," is not bad for local elections. Such vague general exhortations as "Do what is right and disregard the consequences," or "Always stick to your friends," are useless. Every case must be considered by itself, for there are no general rules. But common sense and common honesty will keep him straight.

The Average Citizen who belongs to a party, but is not the slave of his party, has a most important function to perform besides that of voting for his party when he agrees with it. It is to save his party from itself and the country from the

tyranny of any one party. I have had occasion more than once to remark that leadership is essential to a democracy. Creative ideas and constructive policies always come from a very few superior minds. But just as the multitude need leaders to inspire them and to think for them, so leaders need the great mass of sensible, well-intentioned followers to keep them in check. The most brilliant leaders may be unscrupulous or domineering. The most earnest leaders may be eager to go too fast or too far. The leaders and the more active party workers taken together may have grown accustomed to care more for their party than for the country, and to use the party mainly as a means of keeping office. We have seen all these things happen in England and France. When such things do happen, it is for the ordinary citizens who have nothing to gain by party success, and who keep their heads free from the fumes of party passion to shift their votes from one side to the other and so rebuke the errors of their chiefs and moderate a dominance dangerous to the public weal. No more than an individual is a party fit to be trusted with overwhelming power. In this way they can maintain the equi-

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librium of the government and recall parties and leaders to a sense of the real objects for which political organizations exist. Was it not this that Abraham Lincoln meant when he spoke of the people as the ultimate force and the reserve of practical wisdom in the nation? or, when he delivered that admirable dictum "You may fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time"?

Nations may err, as individuals err. Majorities, so Carlyle and others have said, are just as often wrong as are minorities. Sometimes a quite small minority turns out to have been right. Still there is, in the long run, a wisdom in the whole people greater than the wisdom of any one man or group. No leader, no party, no legislature, can ever ruin a State while the great body of Average Citizens, the better educated and the less educated taken together, continue to maintain a high level of public spirit and practical good sense.

## IV

### HOW TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES TO GOOD CITIZENSHIP

IN the preceding three lectures the chief hindrances to the discharge of civic duty have been considered. Let us now go on to inquire what can be done to remove these hindrances by grappling with those faults or weaknesses in the citizen to which they are due. When symptoms have been examined, one looks about for remedies.

We have seen that of the three causes assigned, Indolence, Selfish Personal Interest, and Party Spirit, the first is the most common, the second the most noxious, the third the most excusable, yet also the most subtle, and perhaps the most likely to affect the class which takes the lead in politics and is incessantly employed upon its daily work. Whether the influence of these causes, or of any of them, is increasing with that more complete democratization of government which we see going on in Europe, is a question that cannot yet be

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answered. Fifty years may be needed before it can be answered, for new tendencies both for good and for evil are constantly emerging and affecting one another in unpredictable ways.

The remedies that may be applied to any defects in the working of governments are some of them Mechanical, some of them Ethical. By Mechanical remedies I understand those which consist in improving the structure or the customs and working devices of government, *i.e.*, the laws and the institutions or political methods, by Ethical those which affect the character and spirit of the people. If you want to get more work and better work done in any industry, you may either improve the machinery, or the implements, by which the work is done, or else improve the strength and skill of the men who run the machinery and use the tools. In doing the former, you sometimes do the latter also, for when the workman has finer tools, he is led on to attempt more difficult work, and thus not only does his own skill become more perfect, but his interest in the work is likely to be increased.

Although in politics by far the most real and lasting progress may be expected from raising the intelligence and virtue of the citizens, still improve-

ments in the machinery of government must not be undervalued. To take away from bad men the means and opportunities by which they may work evil, to furnish good men with means and opportunities which make it easier for them to prevent or overcome evil, is to render a great service. And as laws which breathe a high spirit help to educate the whole community, so does the presence of opportunities for reform stimulate and invigorate the best citizens in their efforts after better things.

I will enumerate briefly some of the remedies that may be classed as Mechanical because they consist in alterations of institutions or methods.

Two of these need only a few passing words, because they are so sweeping ~~as to involve the whole fabric of government~~, and therefore too large to be discussed here.

One is propounded by those thinkers whom, to distinguish them from the persons who announce themselves as enemies of all society, we may call the Philosophical Anarchists, thinkers who are entitled to respectful consideration because their doctrine represents a protest that needs to be made against the conception of an all-engulfing State in which individual initiative and self-guided development



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might be merged and lost. (They desire to get rid of the defects of government by getting rid of government itself; that is to say, by leaving men entirely alone without any coercive control, trusting to their natural good impulses to restrain them from harming one another.) In such a state of things there would be no Citizenship, properly so called, but only the isolation of families, or perhaps of individuals — for it is not quite clear how far the family is expected to remain in the Anarchist paradise — an isolation more or less qualified by brotherly love. We are so far at present from a prospect of reaching the conditions needed for such an amelioration that it is enough to note this view and pass on.

A second and diametrically opposite cure for the evils of existing society comes from those who are commonly termed Socialists or Collectivists. It consists in so widely enlarging the functions of government as to commit to it not merely all the work it now performs of defending the country, maintaining order, enacting laws, and enforcing justice between man and man, but also the further work of producing and distributing all commodities, allotting to each man his proper labour and proper remuneration, or possibly, instead of giving

any pecuniary remuneration, providing each man with what he needs for life. Under this régime two of the hindrances to good citizenship would be much reduced. (There ought to be less indifference to politics when everybody's interest in the management of public concerns had been immensely increased by the fact that he found himself dependent on the public officials for everything.) Nobody could plead that he was occupied by his own private business, because his private business would have vanished. (So also selfish personal interest in making gains out of government must needs disappear when private property itself had ceased to exist.) Whether, however, self-interest might not still find means of influencing public administration in ways beneficial to individual cupidity, and whether personal selfishness might not be even more dangerous, under such conditions, in proportion to the extended range and power of government, — this is another question which cannot be discussed till some definite scheme for the allotment of work and of remuneration (if any) shall have been propounded. Party Spirit would evidently, in a Collectivistic State, pass into new forms. It might, however, become more potent

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than ever before. But that again would depend on the kind of scheme for the reshaping of economic society that had been adopted.

We may pass from these suggestions for the extinction, or reconstruction on new lines, of the existing social and political system, to certain minor devices for improving the structure and methods of government which have been put forward as likely to help the citizen to discharge his duties more efficiently.

One of these is the system of Proportional Representation. It is argued that if electoral areas were created with more than two members each, and if each elector was either allowed to vote for a number of candidates less than the number to be chosen, or was allowed to concentrate all his votes upon one candidate, or more, according to the number to be chosen, two good results would follow. The will of the electors would be more adequately and exactly expressed, because the minority, or possibly more than one minority, as well as the majority, would have everywhere its representative. The zeal of the electors would be stimulated, because in each district a section of opinion not large enough to have a chance of winning an election,

if there were but one member, and accordingly now apathetic, because without hope, would then be roused to organize itself and to take a warmer interest in public affairs. (The Proportional system is, therefore, advocated as one of those improvements in machinery which would react upon the people by quickening the pulses of public life.) Some experiments have already been made in this direction. Those tried in England did not win general approval and have been dropped. That which is still in operation in the State of Illinois has not, if my informants are right, given much satisfaction. But the plan is said to work well both in Belgium and in some of the cantons of Switzerland; so one may hope that further experiments will be attempted. It deserves your careful study, but it is too complicated and opens too many side issues to be further discussed now and here.<sup>1</sup>

Attempts have been made in some places to overcome the indifference of citizens to their duty by fining those who, without sufficient excuse, fail to vote. This plan of Obligatory Voting, as it

<sup>1</sup>Since the above was written a Royal Commission has been appointed in Britain to examine divers questions relating to elections, and is investigating this, among other plans.

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is called, finds favour in some Swiss cantons and in Belgium, but is too uncongenial to the habits of England or of the United States to be worth considering as a practical measure in either country. Moreover, the neglect to vote is no very serious evil in either country, at least as regards the more important elections. Swiss legislation on the subject is evidence not so much of indifference among the citizens of that country as of the high standard of public duty they are expected to reach.

When we come to the proposals made both here and in England for the reference of proposals to a direct popular vote, we come to a question of real practical importance. I wish that I had time to state to you and to examine the arguments both for and against this mode of legislation, which has been practised for many years in Switzerland with a virtually unanimous approval, and has been applied pretty freely in some of your States. It has taken two forms. One is the so-called Initiative, under which a section of the electors (being a number, or a proportion, prescribed by law) may propose a law upon which the people vote. This is being tried in Switzerland, but so far as I have been able to gather, has not yet

proved its utility. The balance of skilled opinion seems to incline against it. The other is called the Referendum, and consists in the submission to popular vote of measures already passed by the legislative body. In this form the reference of laws to the people undoubtedly sharpens the interest of the ordinary citizen in the conduct of public affairs. The Swiss voters, at any rate, take pains to inform themselves on the merits of the measures submitted to them. These are widely and acutely canvassed at public meetings, and in the press. A large vote is usually cast, and all, whether or no they approve the result, agree that it is an intelligent, not a heedless, vote. The Swiss do not seem to think that the power and dignity of the legislature is weakened, as some might expect it to be, when their final voice is thus superseded by that of the people. (All I need now ask you to note and remember is that the practice of bringing political issues directly before the people, whatever its drawbacks, does tend to diminish both that indolence and indifference which is pretty common among European voters. It requires every citizen to think for himself and deliver his vote upon all the more important measures,

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and it also reduces the power of that Party Spirit which everywhere distracts men's minds from the real merits of the questions before the country. When a law is submitted to the Swiss people for their judgment, their decision nowise affects either the Executive or the Legislature. The law may be rejected by the people, but the officials who drafted the law continue to hold office. The party which brought it in and carried it through the Legislature is not deemed to have been censured or weakened by the fact of its ultimate rejection. That party spirit is less strong in Switzerland than in any other free country (except perhaps Norway) may be largely attributed to this disjunction of the deciding voice in legislation from those governmental organs which every political party seeks to control. The Swiss voter is to-day an exceptionally intelligent and patriotic citizen, fitter to exercise the function of direct legislation than perhaps any other citizen in Europe, and the practice of directly legislating has doubtless helped to train him for the function.

It must, however, be admitted that the circumstances of that little republic and its cantons are too peculiar to make it safe to draw inferences from Swiss experience to large countries like Britain and

France, the political life of which is highly centralized. The States of your Union may appear to offer a better field, and the results of the various experiments which some of them (such as Oklahoma) are trying will be watched with interest by Europeans.

In considering the harm done to civic duty by selfish personal interests we were led to observe that the fewer points of contact between government and the pecuniary interests of private citizens, the better both for the purity of government and for the conscience of the private citizen. How far government ought to include within its functions schemes for increasing national wealth, otherwise than by such means (being means which a government alone can employ because to be effective they must be done on a great scale) as the improving of education, the diffusing of knowledge, the providing means of transportation, the conservation of natural resources, and so forth, may be matter for debate. But at any rate government ought to avoid measures tending to enrich any one person or group of persons at the expense of the citizens generally. Common justice requires that. Accordingly, all contracts should be made on the terms best for the public, and if pos-



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sible by open bidding. Franchises, if not reserved by the public authority for itself, should be granted only for limited times and so as to secure the interests of the community, whether by way of a rent payable to the city or county treasury or otherwise. Public employees should not be made into a privileged class, to which there is given larger pay than other workers of the same class and capacity receive. All bills promoted by a private person, firm, or company looking to his or their pecuniary advantage ought to be closely scrutinized by some responsible public authority.) In England we draw a sharp distinction between such bills and general public legislation, and we submit the former to a quasi-judicial examination by a Parliamentary committee in order to avoid possible jobs or scandals or losses to the public. As respects general legislation, *i.e.*, that which is not in its terms local or personal, it may be difficult or impossible to prevent a law from incidentally benefiting one group or class of men and injuring another. But (everything that can be done ought to be done to prevent any set of men from abusing legislation to serve their own interest.) If there be truth in what one hears about the groups which

in France, Belgium, and Germany have, through political pressure, obtained by law bounties benefiting their industries, or tariffs specially favourable to their own commercial enterprises, the danger that the general tax payer, or the consumer, may be sacrificed to these private interests, is a real danger. (To remove the occasion and the opportunities for the exercise of such pressure, which is likely to be often exerted in a covert way and to warp or pervert the legislator's mind, is to diminish a temptation and to remove a stumbling block that lies in the path of civic duty. ) Whether a man be in theory a Protectionist or a Free Trader, whether or not he desires to nationalize public utilities, he must recognize the dangers incident to the passing of laws which influential groups of wealthy men may have a personal interest in promoting or resisting, because they offer a prospect of gain sufficiently large to make it worth while to "get at" legislatures and officials. ) Such dangers arise in all governments. That which makes them formidable in democracies is the fact that the interest of each individual citizen in protecting himself and the public against the selfish groups may be so small an interest that everybody neglects it, and the groups get their way.

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As we have been considering improvements in the machinery of government, this would be a fitting place for a discussion of what you call Primary Election Laws, which are intended both to reduce the power of party organizations and to stimulate the personal zeal of the voter by making it easier for him to influence the selection of a candidate.) We have, however, in Europe, nothing corresponding to the Primary Laws of American States, nothing which recognizes a political party as a concrete body, nothing which deals with the mode of selecting candidates; and many of you doubtless know better than I do what has been the effect of these American enactments and whether they have really roused the ordinary citizen to bestir himself and to assert his independence of such party organizations as may have heretofore interfered with it. Europeans do not take kindly to the notion of giving statutory recognition to a Party, and they doubt whether the astuteness of those whom you call "machine politicians" may not succeed in getting hold of the new statutory Primaries as they did of the old ones. Be the merits of the new legislation what they may, one must hope that its existence will not induce the friends of reform to relax their efforts to reduce in other ways the power of political "Machines."

One obvious expedient to which good citizens may resort for keeping other citizens up to the mark is to be found in the enactment and enforcement of stringent laws against breaches of public trust.) I took occasion, in referring to the practices of bribery and treating at elections, to note the wholesome effect of the statute passed in England in 1883 for repressing those offences. Although St. Paul has told us that he who is under grace does not need to be under the law, Christianity has not yet gone far enough to enable any of us to dispense with the moral force law can exert, both directly through the penalties it imposes and indirectly through the type of conduct which it exhorts the community to maintain. (Laws may do much to raise and sustain the tone of all the persons engaged in public affairs as officials or as legislators, not only by appealing to their conscience, but by giving them a quick and easy reply to those who seek improper favours from them. A statute may express the best conscience of the whole people and set the standard they approve, even where the practice of most individuals falls short of the standard. If the prosecuting authorities and the Courts do their duty unflinchingly, without regard to the social position of the

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offender, a statute may bring the practice of ordinary men up to the level of that collective conscience of the nation which it embodies.

In every walk of life a class of persons constantly subject to a particular set of temptations is apt to form habits, due to the pressure of those temptations, which are below what the conscience of the better men in the community approves. The aim of legislation, as expressing that best conscience of the whole community, ought to be to correct or extirpate those habits and make each particular class understand that it is not to be excused because it has special temptations and thinks its own sins venial. Even the men who yield to the temptations peculiar to their own class are willing to join in condemning those who yield to some other kind of temptation. Thus the "better conscience" may succeed in screwing up one class after another to a higher level. But the enactment of a law is not enough. It must be strictly enforced. Procedure must be prompt. Juries must be firm. Technicalities must not be suffered to obstruct the march of justice. Sentences must be carried out, else the statute will become, as statutes often have become, a record of aspiration rather than of accomplishment.

To contrive plans by which the interest of the citizen in public affairs shall be aroused and sustained, is far easier than to induce the citizen to use and to go on using, year in and year out, the contrivances and opportunities provided for his benefit. Yet it is from the heart and will of the citizen that all real and lasting improvements must proceed. In the words of the Gospel, it is the inside of the cup and platter that must be made clean.

(The central problem of civic duty is the ethical problem. Indifference, selfish interests, the excesses of party spirit, will all begin to disappear as civic life is lifted on to a higher plane, and as the number of those who, standing on that higher plane, will apply a strict test to their own conduct and to that of their leaders, realizing and striving to discharge their responsibilities, goes on steadily increasing until they come to form the majority of the people) What we have called "the better conscience" must be grafted on to the "wild stock" of the natural Average Man.

How is this to be done? The difficulty is the same as that which meets the social reformer or the preacher of religion.

One must try to reach the Will through the Soul.

(The most obvious way to begin is through the education of those who are to be citizens, moral education combined with and made the foundation for instruction in civic duty. ) This is a task which the Swiss alone among European nations seem to have seriously undertaken. Here in America it has become doubly important through the recent entrance into your community of a vast mass of immigrants, most of them ignorant of our language, still more of them ignorant, not only of your institutions, but of the general principles and habits of free government. Most of them doubtless belong to races of high natural intelligence, and many of them have the simple virtues of the peasant. You are providing for all of them good schools, and their children will soon become Americans in speech and habits, quite patriotic enough so far as flag-waving goes. But they will not so soon or so completely acquire your intellectual and moral standard, or imbibe your historical and religious traditions. There is no fear but what they will quickly learn to vote. To some Europeans you seem to have been overconfident in intrusting them with a power which most of them cannot yet have learned to use wisely. That however you have done, and as you hold that it cannot now be undone, your task must now be to teach them, if

you can, to understand your institutions, to think about the vote they have to give, and to realize the responsibilities which the suffrage implies as these were realized by your New England forefathers when they planted free commonwealths in the wilderness nearly three centuries ago.

Valuable as instruction may be in fitting the citizen to comprehend and judge upon the issues which his vote determines, there must also be the will to apply his knowledge for the public good. What appeal shall be made to him?

We, — I say “we” because this is our task in Europe no less than it is yours here — we may appeal to his enlightened self-interest, making self-interest so enlightened that it loses its selfish quality. We can remind him of all the useful work which governments may accomplish when they are conducted by the right men in the right spirit. Take, for instance, the work to be performed in those cities wherein so large and increasing a part of the population now dwell. How much remains to be done to make cities healthier, to secure better dwellings for the poor, to root out nests of crime, to remove the temptations to intemperance and gambling, to bring within the reach of the poorest all possible facilities both for intellectual



progress and for enjoying the pleasures of art and music. How much may we do so to adorn the city with parks and public buildings as to make its external aspect instil the sense of beauty into its inhabitants and give them a fine pride in it! These are some of the tasks which cannot safely be intrusted to a municipality unless its government is above suspicion, unless men of probity and capacity are placed in power, unless the whole community extends its sympathy to the work and keeps a vigilant eye upon all the officials. Municipal governments cannot be encouraged to own public utilities so long as there is a risk that somebody may own municipal governments. Have we not here a strong motive for securing purity and efficiency in city administration? Is it not the personal interest of every one of us that the city we dwell in should be such as I have sought to describe? Nothing makes more for happiness than to see others around one happy. The rich residents need not grudge—nor indeed would your rich residents grudge, for there is less grumbling among the rich tax payers here than in Europe—taxation which they could see was being honestly spent for the benefit of the city. The interest each one of

us has as a member of a city or a nation in seeing our fellow-citizens healthy, peaceful, and happy is a greater interest, if it be measured in terms of our own real enjoyment of life, than is that interest, of which we so constantly are reminded, which we have in making the State either wealthy by the development of trade, or formidable to foreign countries by its armaments.

(We may also appeal to every citizen's sense of dignity and self-respect. We may bid him recollect that he is the heir of rights and privileges which your and our ancestors fought for, and which place him, whatever his birth or fortune, among the rulers of his country. He is unworthy of himself, unmindful of what he owes to the Constitution that has given him these functions, if he does not try to discharge them worthily.) These considerations are no doubt familiar to us Englishmen and Americans, though we may not always feel their force as deeply as we ought. To the new immigrants of whom I have already spoken they are unfamiliar; yet to the best among these also they have sometimes powerfully appealed. You had, in the last generation, no more high-minded and patriotic citizen than the German exile of 1849, the late Mr. Carl Schurz.

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When every motive has been invoked, and every expedient applied that can stimulate the sense of civic duty, one never can feel sure that the desired result will follow. The moral reformer and the preacher of religion have the same experience. The ebbs and flows of ethical life are beyond the reach of scientific prediction. There are times of awakening, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," as your Puritan ancestors said, but we do not know when they will come nor can we explain why they come just when they do. Every man can recall moments in his own life when the sky seemed to open above him, and when his vision was so quickened that all things stood transfigured in a purer and brighter radiance, when duty, and even toil done for the sake of duty, seemed beautiful and full of joy.

You remember Wordsworth's lines

"Hence, in a season of fair weather,  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that celestial sea  
That brought us hither."

If we survey the wide field of European history, we shall find that something like this happens with nations also. They, too, have moments of exaltation, moments of depression. Their ideals

rise and fall. They are for a time filled with a spirit which seeks truth, which loves honour, which is ready for self-sacrifice; and after a time the light begins to fade from the hills and this spirit lingers only among the best souls.

Such a spirit is sometimes evoked by a great national crisis which thrills all hearts. This happened to England or at least to a large part of the people of England, in the seventeenth century. It happened to Germany in the days of the War of Liberation, and to Italy when she was striving to expel the Austrians and the petty princes who ruled by Austria's help. You here felt it during the War of Secession. ( Sometimes, and usually at one of these crises, a great man stands out who helps to raise the feeling of his people and inspire them with his own lofty thoughts and aims. ) Such a man was Mazzini, seventy years ago in Italy. Such were Washington and Lincoln, the former more by his example than by his words, the latter by both, yet most by the quiet patience, dignity, and hopefulness which he showed in the darkest hours. ( Nations respond to the appeal which such a man makes to their best instincts. He typifies for the moment whatever is highest in them. )

Unhappily, with nations as with individuals, there is apt to be a relapse from these loftier moods into the old common ways when selfish interest and trivial pleasures resume their sway. There comes a sort of reaction from the stress of virtue and strenuous high soaring effort. Everything looks gray and dull. The divine light has died out of the sky. This, too, is an oft-repeated lesson of European history. Yet the reaction and decline are not inevitable. When an individual man has been raised above himself by some spiritual impulse, he is sometimes able to hold the ground he has won. His will may have been strengthened. He has learnt to control the meaner desires. The impulse that stirred him is not wholly spent, because the nobler thoughts and acts which it prompted have become a habit with him. So, too, with a nation. What habits are to the individual man, that, to a nation, are its Traditions. They are the memories of the Past turned into the standards of the Present. High traditions go to form a code of honour, which speaks with authority to the sense of honour. Whoever transgresses that code is felt to be unworthy of the nation, unfit to hold that place in its respect and confidence which the great ones of the days of

old have held. Pride in the glorious foretime of the race and in its heroes sustains in the individual man who is called to public duty, the personal pride which makes him feel that all his affections and all his emotions stand rooted in the sense of honour, which is, for the man and for the nation, the foundation of all virtue.

We have seen in our own time, in the people of Japan, a striking example of what the passionate attachment to a national ideal can do in war to intensify the sense of duty and self-sacrifice. A similar example is held up to us by those who have recorded the earlier annals of Rome. The deepest moral they teach is the splendid power which the love of Rome and the idea of what her children owed to her exercised over her great citizens, enabling them to set shining examples of devotion to the city which the world has admired ever since. Each example evoked later examples in later generations, till at last in a changed community, its upper class demoralized by wealth and power even more than it was torn by discord, its lower classes corrupted by the upper and looking on their suffrage as a means of gain, the ancient traditions died out. Whoever, studying the conditions of

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modern European democracies, sees the infinite facilities which popular government in large countries full of rich men and of opportunities for acquiring riches, offers for the perversion of government to private selfish ends, will often feel that those European states which have maintained the highest standard of civic purity have done it in respect of their Traditions. Were these to be weakened, the fabric might crumble into dust.

Every new generation as it comes up can make the traditions which it finds better or worse. If its imagination is touched and its emotions stirred by all that is finest in the history of its country, it learns to live up to the ideals set before it, and thus it strengthens the best standards of conduct it has inherited and prolongs the reverence felt for them.

The responsibility for forming ideals and fixing standards does not belong to statesmen alone. It belongs, and now perhaps more largely than ever before, to the intellectual leaders of the nation, and especially to those who address the people in the Universities and through the press. Teachers, writers, journalists, are forming the mind of modern nations to an extent previously unknown. Here

they have opportunities such as have existed never before, nor in any other country, for trying to inspire the nation with a love of truth and honour, with a sense of the high obligations of citizenship, and especially of those who hold public office.

Of the power which the daily press exerts upon the thought and the tastes of the people through the matter it scatters among them, and of the grave import of the choice it has always and everywhere to make between the serious treatment of public issues and that cheap cynicism which so many readers find amusing, there is no need to speak here. You know better than I do how far those who direct the press realize and try to discharge the responsibilities which attach to their power.

The observer who seeks to discern and estimate the forces working for good or evil that mark the spirit and tendencies of an age, finds it easiest to do this by noting the changes which have occurred within his own memory. To-day everyone seems to dwell upon the growth not only of luxury, but of the passion for amusement, and most of those who can look back thirty or forty years find in this growth grounds for discouragement.



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ment. I deny neither the fact nor the significance of the auguries that it suggests. But let us also note a hopeful sign manifest during the last twenty years both here and in England. It is the diffusion among the educated and richer classes of a warmer feeling of sympathy and a stronger feeling of responsibility for the less fortunate sections of the community. There is more of a sense of brotherhood, more of a desire to help, more of a discontent with those arrangements of society which press hardly on the common man than there was forty years ago. This altruistic spirit which is now everywhere visible in the field of private philanthropic work, seems likely to spread into the field of civic action also, and may there become a new motive power. It has already become a more efficient force in legislation than it ever was before. We may well hope that it will draw more and more of those who love and seek to help their fellow-men into that legislative and administrative work whose opportunities for grappling with economic and social problems become every day greater.

Here in America I am told in nearly every city I visit that the young men are more and more caring for and bestirring themselves to discharge

their civic duties. That is the best news one can hear. Surely no country makes so clear a call upon her citizens to work for her as yours does. Think of the wide-spreading results which good solid work produces on so vast a community, where everything achieved for good in one place is quickly known and may be quickly imitated in another. Think of the advantages for the development of the highest civilization which the boundless resources of your territory provide. Think of that principle of the Sovereignty of the People which you have carried further than it was ever carried before and which requires and inspires and, indeed, compels you to endeavour to make the whole people fit to bear a weight and discharge a task such as no other multitude of men ever yet undertook. Think of the sense of fraternity, also without precedent in any other great nation, which binds all Americans together and makes it easier here than elsewhere for each citizen to meet every other citizen as an equal upon a common ground. One who, coming from the Old World, remembers the greater difficulties the Old World has to face, rejoices to think how much, with all these advantages, the youth of America, such youth as

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I see here to-night in this venerable University, may accomplish for the future of your country. Nature has done her best to provide a foundation whereon the fabric of an enlightened and steadily advancing civilization may be reared. It is for you to build upon that foundation. Free from many of the dangers that surround the states of Europe, you have unequalled opportunities for showing what a high spirit of citizenship — zealous, intelligent, disinterested — may do for the happiness and dignity of a mighty nation, enabling it to become what its founders hoped it might be — a model for other peoples more lately emerged into the sunlight of freedom.

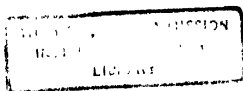
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